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Christianity and Secular Ideologies

Two numbers ago in *The Student World* we described the major project of thinking, study, and teaching the Federation has undertaken on that broad but fundamental theme, "The Life and Mission of the Church". It is obvious that we cannot think about the responsibility of our churches, about our responsibilities in this world, unless we are truly aware of the world within which we must fulfil them. I have underlined in many previous editorials that our missionary task is determined by two foci — God and the world : the good news of Jesus Christ and the men and women to whom this good news is addressed. It would be easy to say that the Church is becoming ridiculous in its evangelistic efforts : it speaks of Jesus Christ, or at least tries to do so, but really speaks in a vacuum. It no longer addresses itself to men and women of the world, that world which God so loved ; it really addresses its message to itself. Its pretended evangelism threatens to become an endless and deadly monologue : it is striking to see how much more easily the Church undertakes revivals to awaken sleepy Christians than real missionary efforts to the non-Christians outside its fold. Yes, we might well consider the Church ridiculous, if the situation were not so tragic. I spoke of the endless and "deadly" monologue in which it is engaged, and I mean just that in every sense of the word. The monologue of the Church with itself is deadly, because a church which ceases to evangelize is sociologically

condemned to die, but even more because it ceases to speak of Jesus Christ and sooner or later ceases to believe in him. It becomes introverted, concerned with strengthening itself in faith, community, sometimes even prestige, and finally it worships itself.

Now why are we at present in such difficulty? Why do we fall so easily into this deadly monologue? Lack of faith indeed, lack of hope even more. We Christians talk a great deal about hope. There has been a real effort in recent years towards a genuine rediscovery of the meaning of hope in the New Testament. The World Council of Churches chose this as the theme for its last Assembly, at Evanston in 1954. We know that Jesus Christ is hope, our hope, the hope of the Church, and the hope of the world. But I am not so sure that we have really worked out this theological conviction in terms of our concrete attitude towards the world and our missionary responsibilities within it. Even though we affirm that Jesus Christ is the hope of the world, we behave as if there were hope only for some sort of residual world, for an empty shell from which everything "worldly" has been carefully thrown out. If we speak of Jesus Christ as the hope of the world, does this mean that Jesus Christ is the hope of nationalism, communism, Buddhism, science, and art, that he is the hope of all men and women in their political and religious faith? In most cases our inclination would be to answer no: that Jesus Christ is the hope of the communist in spite of his communism, of the scientist in spite of his science, of the Moslem in spite of Islam. I do not know how we could explain theologically that Jesus Christ is the hope of communism or science or Islam; this would call for very careful study and much discussion. But I know that if we speak of him as hope for all these men and women in spite of, apart from, what they believe, that to which they devote their lives, anything we may tell them about Jesus Christ as the hope of the world will be meaningless.

Experience, unfortunately, has proved more than abundantly that the Church, by taking an attitude of exclusiveness, by refusing to be attentive to, concerned with, what men live for, has really cut itself off from any genuine missionary encounter with the world. The present crisis of missionary thinking and

action is not only the result of theological confusion within the Church about its message. It is certainly not primarily the result of the world's opposition or hostility. It is to a large extent the fruit of the Church's plain ignorance of the world. This is why in this project on "The Life and Mission of the Church" the Federation decided to give major attention to a careful study of the great forces, ideas, and ways of life which at the present time shape the life of the world.

There is no question, of course, of learning about the world in order to discover what our message should be: the content of our message depends on God and his revelation alone. Our task is rather to find the language in which that message can be conveyed. Unless we know what men and women of the twentieth century think, like, long for, or fear, we shall never be able to address them, however pure and sincere our Christian message may be.

Nor is our task to make an analysis of human needs to find the points of weakness in the present world, to describe the futility of human hopes, and the frailty of human power. We are not sent into the world to proclaim to it that it is human, imperfect, mortal, but to bring it a message of hope. We can address that message of hope to men who are full of human hopes as well as to those who know despair or disillusionment. Jesus Christ is the hope of the world, of the successful world as well as of the world which fails. Nevertheless, we still need to know what are today the forms, the nature of men's hopes and despairs, successes and failures. Otherwise we shall not speak to men but to some sort of ghosts born in our own minds; we shall fall back into the old deadly monologue.

This is why we are starting a series of issues of *The Student World* about the present world. This number is the first of two dealing with "Christianity and the Faiths of Modern Man". It concentrates on contemporary secular ideologies, while another later this year will deal with ancient religions. We do not claim, of course, to have covered the whole field. If anyone should undertake to make a list of the secular ideologies of our day, their simple enumeration would fill many pages. We have dealt here essentially with two of the most successful and challenging intellectual systems which now appeal to students (apart from

the ancient religions) : on the one hand, Marxism, on the other, existentialism. We realize that this choice is rather arbitrary, and that many other "isms" could have been selected with equal validity. One might wonder particularly whether nationalism should not have been included in this list. Liberal humanism is another example, and we had hoped at one time to secure an article on it. It is obvious above all that the philosophy of science, scientism, if one wishes to use that word, deserves much more elaborate treatment than we could afford in this number. However, one can say with some truth that Marxism, either as an ideology or as a political program, and existentialism, as a philosophy or as a way of life, are among the most widespread attitudes among students of our day, the most outspoken "rivals" with whom we have to deal in the missionary conversation. It is unnecessary to point out the extension of communism throughout the world and its appeal not only to the proletariat but especially to intellectuals. As to existentialism, though in its philosophical or ideological form it is more strictly located among intellectual circles of the Western world, in many ways some of its fundamental implications for life are implicitly accepted or assumed in a large part of the world, for instance, in the general growing scepticism towards the traditional ideals of classical rationalism and liberalism. However, it is certain that this issue deals at some points more with the Western world than the Eastern, just as the one on ancient religions will have much more significance for Asia and Africa.

PH. M.

Is Existentialism a Faith ?

NICOLA ABBAGNANO

Two clarifications will be helpful in answering this question. The first is that existentialism is not one single philosophical school or a clear and coherent doctrine, but a philosophical trend which embraces diverse and often controversial doctrines and schools. These doctrines have the following points in common : 1) the way in which they "practise" philosophy as an "analysis of existence", and by existence we mean the way in which it is peculiar to man ; 2) the conceptual instruments of which they make use in this analysis, especially the category of the possible. As these two common points diminish very little the diversity of the existentialist doctrines, this diversity must be borne in mind in answering the question with which we are dealing. The second clarification is that, in our question, faith obviously means religious faith and not a generic "belief". Therefore the question can be expressed in the following way : Does existentialism tend to assume the form of a religious faith, or does it tend to supplant other existing religious faiths ?

A common characteristic — commitment

There is no doubt that existentialism has at least one characteristic in common with religious faith : that of *commitment*. Let us consider the attitude of detachment which Schopenhauer was able to assume in relation to his own philosophy. This philosophy prescribed asceticism as the only attitude possible with regard to the perversity and disorder of the world ; but he did not feel himself committed in the least by this conclusion, nor did he consider that the readers should feel committed by it, unless they already felt within themselves a disposition to asceticism. An existentialist philosopher could never assume such an attitude, since he does not consider philosophy as a formula to which only those who feel so inclined might have recourse, but as a

commitment for himself and for all those who admit the validity of his analyses. The existential character of philosophy, on which Kierkegaard and Nietzsche had already insisted, is one of the characteristic tenets of existentialism. Now, a religious faith is existentialist in the same sense. Kierkegaard had already recognized this point very clearly. However, this fact alone is not sufficient to justify our affirming that existentialism tends to be a religious faith. In fact, a religious faith is not only to be identified by the commitment, but by the specific character which the commitment assumes within it: it is a commitment concerning *revealed* truth. Is it possible to find a similar commitment in the sphere of existentialism?

Heidegger's philosophy of revelation

One might be tempted to give an affirmative answer to this question. Heidegger's philosophy, in its last phase, is clearly a philosophy of revelation. It is true that Heidegger denies that the being which reveals itself, and for this very reason hides itself at the same time, in man and in the things of the world, is God or the cause of the world. Heidegger only says that it is "Himself" and that it is "beyond any being". But the relationship of this phase of his philosophy with Schelling's philosophy of revelation and, going farther back, with the ancient neo-Platonism, is sufficiently evident to encourage a positive answer with regard to the religious character of this philosophy. Heidegger understands and practises philosophy itself not as an investigation, a discipline, or a science, but as a prophecy and an apocalyptic proclamation. In his own eyes as well as in those of his closest disciples, Heidegger appears not as a philosopher, but as a prophet. Can we then describe existentialism, at least as he expresses it, as a faith?

The answer should be yes, *if*, in this phase, Heidegger's philosophy could still be called existentialism. In reality it can no longer be considered as such. Heidegger himself denies it and with good reason. "The question which worries me", he says, "is not that of man's existence; it is that of the being as a whole and as such"¹. His philosophy, at this stage, is no

¹ *Bulletin de la Société française de Philosophie*, 1937, no. 5, p. 193.

longer an analysis of existence ; on the contrary, in reality, it is not an analysis of anything ; but rather it is proclamation and prophecy. The instrument to which it has recourse is not the category of the possible, but that of the necessary : "All that is has already in the beginning found its perfection in Being."¹ Therefore the two characteristics which, as we have said, are peculiar to existentialism (the analysis of existence and the use in this analysis of the category of the possible) have been eliminated from Heidegger's philosophy. In other words, this philosophy appears today as a kind of religious faith because it is no longer existentialism.

Heidegger's case can be considered as one of the alternatives to which the relationship between existentialism and religious faith leads. We can consider the result of this relationship in Heidegger's philosophy as in a certain sense typical, and can assume that whenever existentialism attempts in some way to become a philosophy of revelation, *mutatis mutandis*, the same thing happens : existentialism ceases to be existentialism.

Sartre's radical irreligion

But there is another way in which existentialism, and philosophy in general, can be considered as a religious faith. It is in professing a radical and intransigent irreligion, and in proposing itself as a faith which abolishes all other possible faiths and supplants them for all purposes, especially in active commitment towards others and the world. This second way is the one taken by Sartre. Sartre is, from one point of view, at the opposite pole from Heidegger. He does not seek to be a prophet of being, but an analyst of existence, and, more precisely, a psychoanalyst of existence. However, his profession of atheism brings his philosophy close to a religious faith. There is, in fact, an anti-religious attitude which is itself almost religious. And this seems to be true not of Sartre as a person, but of the attitude which he considers typical of, and fundamental to, human existence. For Sartre, in fact, to be a man means to seek to be God. Man is the being who "aims to be God". "Whatever may be the

¹ "Im Sein hat sich anfänglich jedes Geschick des Seienden schon vollendet." *Was ist Metaphysik*, 1943, p. 46.

myths and rites of the religion under consideration", says Sartre, "God is first of all sensitive to the heart of man as that which proclaims and characterizes him in his ultimate and fundamental intention. And if man possesses a pre-ontological understanding of the being of God, then he has not received it from the great wonders of nature or from the power of society ; but God, as the supreme value and aim of transcendence, represents the permanent limit, beyond which man makes known his own nature. To be man is to tend to be God ; or, if you prefer, man is fundamentally the desire to be God." ¹ Feuerbach had previously said : "The absolute essence, the God of man, is the essence of man himself." ² The reappearance, in Sartre's analysis, of a thesis which is characteristic of Feuerbach's atheism, throws a certain light on the relationship existing between Sartre's existentialism and religious faith. For Sartre, in religious faith and in the idea of God, there is this truth : that every man seeks to be God. From this point of view, existence itself, in its very structure, can be called a faith. But it is a faith which has nothing to do with religious faith ; on the contrary, it is a faith which tends to accentuate the separation between man and God and finds its first condition in the recognition of this separation. Sartre's existentialism, like Feuerbach's anthropology, tends to deprive Christian faith of its significance, and therefore to supplant it. To affirm that God is nothing but man himself as he seeks or desires to be, means to deny God, and at the same time to see in the relationship between man and his ideal or aim a kind of counterfeit or substitute for the relationship between man and God which is peculiar to faith. Sartre's existentialism is, therefore, an inverted faith, a deluded and negative faith.

An inverted faith

We have said that Heidegger's philosophy ceased to be existentialism when it became a philosophy of revelation and claimed to be a faith. What can we say of Sartre's diagnosis

¹ *L'être et le néant*, p. 653-54.

² "Das absolute Wesen, der Gott des Menschen, ist sein eigenes Wesen". *Essence of Christianity*, 1841, para. 1.

according to which existence itself is a kind of inverted faith ? We can say that human desires can certainly extend themselves to the infinite, but that it is improbable that they attain it. And if we are led from the desires which are possibilities in our day-dreams and fancies, to consider — as a philosophy of existence should — the real possibilities which make up man's existence, we find no trace of the infinite in these possibilities. The possibilities which are at man's disposal are limited, finite, conditioned, precarious, uncertain in their realization and in their conservation. Neither from a numeric nor from a qualitative point of view can they be considered "infinite". Sartre knows this very well, and has constantly insisted in his philosophical and literary work on the failure and defeat of human possibilities. But even if all that man projects could be realized, the projection that man makes of his being could not be called God. It would always be a limited, finite, and conditioned projection, just as any other : the projection of a being which can project itself only by virtue of itself, and therefore falls back into its finiteness despite itself. Sartre did not make consistent use of the idea of existential possibility, since he considered it infinite or apt to become infinite, while as possibility it has no meaning if it is not finite. There is, in fact, little coherence in saying that man is the possibility of being God and at the same time the impossibility of this possibility.

Jaspers' existentialism which leads to faith

Jaspers' position seems more consistent in this regard. Jaspers has clearly affirmed that Being as such, i.e. Transcendence, is not a possibility of human existence. However, it reveals or proclaims itself indirectly in this existence, especially in limit situations, that is, in those situations which are expressed by a "not to be able not to" : not to be able not to fight, not to be able not to die, not to be able not to sin. In these situations transcendence is present in the form of man's impossibility to overcome them. The most certain sign of transcendence is man's failure in trying to overcome or understand them ; in this failure transcendence itself makes its presence felt ; it is the figure, the

symbol of its sentence ¹. This point of view does not transform existentialism into a religious faith, but it doubtless opens the way to a religious faith. This is a third alternative in the relationship between existentialism and faith, that is, not to be identified either with faith or with anti-faith, but to lead to faith. There are other forms of existentialism trying to accomplish this function more explicitly and, so to speak, more crudely, as for instance the rather more spiritual and Catholic-tending existentialism of Marcel, Lavelle, and Le Senne.

No objection of principle could be made to these attempts (for which, however, existentialism is *not* a faith) if it were not that they, too, make rather inconsistent use of the conceptual instrument which existentialism uses for its analyses, that is, the category of the possible. Jaspers stresses the idea of *impossibility*, which is the negative necessity and therefore has nothing to do with possibility, but on the contrary excludes it. One cannot see how to reconcile this with his statement (which also is characteristic of the whole of existentialism) that human existence is a *possible existence*. This affirmation can only mean that existence must be interpreted in terms of possibility and not of necessity. It therefore also excludes the interpretation of existence in terms of *potentiality*, that is, of "possibilities which are destined to realize themselves". In fact, a possibility is such only if it may also not be realized; if it is destined to be realized, it is a certainty.

The future contribution of existentialism

At this point, I shall very simply and clearly express my point of view. It is the following: though existentialism shares with faith its character of commitment, it is, as long as it makes consistent use of the conceptual instruments which are at its disposal, neither a faith nor an anti-faith, nor a preparation for faith. Existentialism can doubtless analyse faith, and is perhaps better equipped than other philosophies to give an exact description of it. But faith remains beyond the attitudes which existentialism, as a philosophy, incarnates and makes its own.

¹ *Philosophie*, III^a, p. 226 sq.

This also means that existentialism does not and cannot deny faith, unless it is situated in the second of the alternatives we discussed. A few years ago, I was making an assessment of contemporary existentialism, and I affirmed that the possibilities offered to this philosophical trend for the future consisted in its capacity — not yet sufficiently explored — to analyse and describe the finite possibilities at man's disposal in nature and in history. If, up to now, I said, existentialism has primarily been a clamorous alarm signal in contemporary civilization, in a period and situation in which there was a real and imminent threat to the values on which civilization rests, from now on it will be able to contribute to the forming in men of a measured sense of risk, to making them less vulnerable to the disappointments of unsuccess, and to inducing them to search, in every field, for effective means to solve their problems¹. An existentialism of this kind, I added, is not apt to produce myths or to encourage them ; therefore it participates neither in the myth of science nor in the myth of anti-science ; neither in the myth of technique nor in the myth of anti-technique. Now I shall add that it cannot be a faith nor an anti-faith ; neither can it serve as a preparation for faith. In relation to faith, as well as to all other human attitudes, it can do one thing only, that is, try to understand it.

¹ *Possibilità e libertà*, 1956, p. 36.

Existentialism and Marxism

MICHEL PHILIBERT

Existentialism and Marxism may be compared in their *common origin*: they are both reactions against the philosophy of Hegel. But we shall show that they are *different reactions*: Marx modifies the content of the Hegelian system but preserves the form; Kierkegaard rejects the systematic form itself.

Hegelian idealism

Hegel propounded a philosophy of history which was *rationalist* in character, *dialectical* in structure, and *idealist* in spirit. *Rationalist*, because for him what is real is rational, that is to say, that the world and humanity, not only in their nature but in their evolution, are fully intelligible: the human reason can understand the order of the world and its own history through successive cultures and philosophies. *Dialectical*, in the sense that the history of humanity is not made simply by the accumulation of discoveries, by the sum of civilizations, by the development of institutions, in short, by continuous progress: history progresses through a series of crises, of conflicts, like a dialogue between opponents who from their initial opposition move through difficult negotiation and sometimes even violence to reach a provisional agreement, and then take up opposite positions on another question, and so on. *Idealist*, finally, in the sense that the ultimate meaning of this human history is the universal Spirit which expresses and realizes itself thereby. The whole constitutes a thoroughgoing system, wherein nothing remains mysterious, but everything yields to logic and has its explanation.

Marxist materialism against Hegelian idealism

Marx preserves the Hegelian dialectic *upside down*: for idealism he substitutes materialism. It is not spirit which leads the world and animates history, but matter. Matter by its own

power initiates life, which in turn produces spirit. *Dialectical materialism* takes account of this process ; it is dialectical in the sense that life in relation to the inert, spirit in relation to life, whether it be reflection or effect of the dynamism of matter, have a certain autonomy in comparison with the conditions of their appearance ; life emerges from the inert, is distinguishable from it and in some respects is in opposition to it ; and the same applies to spirit in relation to life, and to man in relation to nature. The relationships are of action and reaction, bringing about new syntheses. Dialectical materialism extends into *historical materialism* ; the expression designates at once a sociological method and a conception of history, of the evolution of human societies. Here again the motive force of history is a set of oppositions which lead to new developments : the class struggle. Classes are groups within a society, defined by their position in relation to the ownership of the means of production. We have here a *materialism* in as much as man is defined primarily as a producer (Marx takes over Franklin's definition of man as a toolmaker), and the technical and economic realities condition the forms of social life and determine consciousness, in such a way that political ideologies, law, religion appear as superstructures — as more or less direct reflections of economic life. But this materialism remains *dialectical*, because it admits that thought, political ideology, consciousness have their effect in turn on economic structures : this justifies political action and, particularly, revolutionary action which helps to bring to birth the solutions with which history is pregnant.

Marxism, in changing the content of Hegel's philosophy, preserves its rationalism. Like the positivism of Comte, another contemporary philosopher of history, it has faith in reason and in its product, knowledge. Through knowledge, of which Marxist philosophy claims to be the culmination, man understands his history, dominates his destiny, builds a better future. The ills from which humanity suffers, those which arise from the harshness of the elements and of climates equally with those self-inflicted in war and exploitation, may be cured by rational policies. Marxist rationalism is thus fundamentally *optimistic* and represents one of the most lively forms of the philosophy of Progress. On the other hand, Marxism preserves and even

accentuates the *systematic* character of Hegelianism. It is at the same time a conception of the world, that is to say a philosophy, and a science ; it is at once a practical method and a political theory ; and for every theoretical and practical problem there is a Marxist method, and Marxist principles and answers. The system covers the whole field of the interests and activities of man ; it can explain, criticize, or correct everything. It is, in other words, *totalitarian*.

Kierkegaard against idealism

Kierkegaard, on the other hand, rebukes Hegel for the excessive rigidity of the system which disregards the mystery of existence and the originality of the individual ; in contrast to Hegel he maintains the *adventurous* and *agonizing* character of personal existence ; this achieves progress by way of decisions in which man risks his salvation, and not by the mechanical and impersonal application of ready-made principles.

The formula in which we often express the master thesis of existentialist philosophies, "*existence is prior to essence*", signifies that our existence is not simply the empirical manifestation in the temporal process of a being, of an eternal predetermined nature ; such a conception in the eyes of the existentialists would remove all seriousness from life and from our decisions and would be equivalent to denying our liberty. For them, on the other hand, man determines himself in the course of his history : through his choices he chooses *and forms himself*, in such a way that his being will only be fixed and knowable at his death.

Differences between Marxism and existentialism

One could certainly demonstrate from these data the points of resemblance between Marxism and existentialism. Both refuse to recognize a universal and eternal human nature, defined once and for all, repeated from one individual to another and from generation to generation ; both put the accent on the historical and precarious character of the human predicament : man invents himself, creates himself ; not from nothing with an arbitrary and all-powerful liberty ; but from the data offered

by nature and custom, accepting some and rejecting others, he modifies the conditions of life and so transforms his own being ; he gives meaning to an existence to which no system, no previous order can guarantee justification.

But Marxism will seek above all in work, in the technical action of man upon nature, the model and the source of that action whereby man at the same time becomes himself ; the philosophies of existence will seek the secret of this creation of man by himself in the decisions of an ethical or religious order through which man gives value to his behaviour. Marxism will study social man above all, work and technique being collective achievements depending on equipment and traditions which belong to the group and not to the individual ; and it claims to interpret the collective history of humanity. Existentialism is concerned more with the individual, with the discovery which each individual ought to make of his own life, and it will often develop the theme of the solitude of man in face of his destiny ; it will insist on these choices that no one else can make in my place and for which I alone am responsible.

Continuing from this point, existentialism will accuse Marxism of dissolving individuality in the mass, of substituting a general historical system for every individual's creation of his own life, and finally of denying liberty. Marxism for its part will see in existentialism a romantic attitude evading the collective tasks wherein the real destiny of man is forged.

But existentialism and Marxism do not only differ in content and spirit ; in the way they influence people, in their status in contemporary thought, *they are on different planes*, and that makes comparison between them more difficult. Any analysis which sought to draw up a balance-sheet of their similarities and their differences, saying, for instance, "Marxism believes in progress and is optimistic whereas existentialism has no philosophy of history and is pessimistic", and things of this kind, would be inadequate and even false. Every comparison of this kind requires that the two things compared should be of the same kind, in this case, for instance, two doctrinal systems or two philosophies. But a philosophy is not only a sum or a system of principles and affirmations expressing a general conception of

man and of the world. A philosophy certainly is such a system, but one elaborated by a particular mind, and the affirmations which this mind makes about the nature of things, about the meaning of history, about the duties of man, only have their full significance when they are seen in relation to the experience out of which they grew, to the movement of thought which sustains and justifies them, in short, to a method of research, an original way of stating the problems.

This is sometimes obscured in manuals of philosophy which sum up the ideas of a philosopher and present his main conclusions, as though philosophies were the different answers brought by successive philosophers to the same eternal problems of humanity. In reality, the answers of a philosopher are relative to the original problems which he states, and cannot be separated from them. One cannot then understand their full significance except by study of the actual works of the author.

If we accept this definition of philosophy, neither Marxism nor existentialism is properly speaking a philosophy. Existentialism is not the philosophy of Kierkegaard. It is doubtful in the first place whether Kierkegaard has a *philosophy*, for though there is a Kierkegaardian *attitude*, there is no Kierkegaardian *system*. Further, whatever may be said of Kierkegaard's thought, existentialism is not to be confused with it. Nor is it a doctrine or a school admitting common conclusions or principles. It is at most a current of thought, an attitude common to several philosophers who are not only distinguishable from each other but actually conflict with each other. It defines a *climate of research*, and not a *sum of results*. There is a group of philosophies which can be called existentialist, but there is no existentialist philosophy which could be recognized as the synthesis of these philosophies.

Marxism as an ideology

As for Marxism, it could not be defined purely and simply as the philosophy of Marx as it is contained in his books. It is the philosophy of the communist movement — the philosophy of a collectivity and no longer of an individual. It is therefore more of an *ideology* than a philosophy, if we may give the name

ideology to a doctrine that has been rendered anonymous, vulgarized, and simplified by the collective use which is made of it.

This transformation of Marxism into an ideology can be observed from several aspects : 1) The collaborators and successors of Marx have added to his work certain extensions, criticisms, and interpretations, which for the "consumer" at the base, the militant member of the Communist Party, have become inseparable and indistinguishable from it. Marxism is no longer the thought of Marx, but of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao-tse-tung... 2) Simultaneously with this "enrichment" (quantitatively speaking) of Marx's thought, its collectivization has produced fixation, sclerosis, and impoverishment. There are two causes for this : the first is the need to vulgarize, to adapt, to simplify the doctrine in order to teach it quickly and surely to a great number of men of different civilizations and of often rudimentary personal culture ; and to teach it in such a way that it will be immediately usable in political warfare. The doctrine has thus been reduced to a catechism, a recipe book, a collection of useful arguments. In the second place, the political evolution, first of the Communist Party and then of the communist state, leads, by way of internal and external polemics and the reinforcement of the "apparatus", to the formation of an orthodoxy guaranteed by the hierarchy ; henceforward the interpretation of Marx is no longer free : there is an official interpretation which is forced upon the recalcitrant by fear, and upon the militant by a phenomenon of emotional contagion, auto-suggestion, and dishonesty ; invention and research are crushed by dogma or driven to evasive tactics and finally rendered sterile. An outstanding example of this state of affairs, which was doubtless at its height under the dictatorship of Stalin, was the Lyssenko affair. 3) Finally, as previously indicated, Marxism is an ideology and not a philosophy, in as much as it has become a tool of action as much as and perhaps more than a tool of knowledge and of reflection. No doubt Marx's ambition to give philosophy the task of transforming the world and not only of knowing it is less original than it appears ; every great philosophy has always been inspired with the desire to regulate practice, to extend theory by action. Descartes long ago announced, instead of the speculative philosophy which was

taught in the schools, a practical philosophy by means of which man should become the master and possessor of nature. And for Socrates the speculation of the philosopher is allied to an asceticism whose purpose is to change the orientation and conduct of actual life. In making the philosopher the master of the City, communism in a sense realizes Plato's ambition as expressed in the *Republic*. But when it becomes an instrument in the fight to conquer or defend power, the Marxist doctrine, which at the outset claimed and still claims the universality and the objectivity of science, agrees to subject the expression of truth and then thought itself to the requirements of action, effectiveness, and propaganda, and ends up by denying the universality and objectivity of truth as a *petit-bourgeois* myth and an illusory cosmopolitanism.

Sartre judges Marxism

We have therefore tried to show that there is a difference of level between a philosophical current, washing an archipelago of distinctive doctrines and of importance to a limited section of humanity, and a mass ideology, informing the activity and hope of hundreds of millions of men, crystallized into an orthodoxy. Before we continue our examination of this, we should like to draw attention to a recent study on the same subject: Jean-Paul Sartre, leader of atheist existentialism in France, has recently published in his review, *Les Temps Modernes*, an article on "questions of method". The first part of this article succeeds in restating the relations between existentialism and Marxism. At first sight Sartre's vocabulary seems rather different from what we have been using to describe the two currents of ideas from the outside. Sartre begins by giving a definition of philosophy whose inspiration is clearly Marxist. Philosophy is indeed for him a certain way in which the rising class becomes conscious of itself; this mirror presents itself as the sum-total of contemporary knowledge, filled in according to directive schemes which translate the techniques and attitudes of the rising class. At the same time, a philosophy takes hold of the future; it is a method of investigation and of explanation; it has a practical importance, whether critical or negative, or

prospective. It is doubtless the work of an individual creator : but it is carried and engendered by a collective "praxis" which it illuminates in turn, and adopted by its contemporaries it loses its singularity, makes its mark upon the masses, and becomes the collective instrument of emancipation. Thus defined as totalization of knowledge, method, regulating idea, offensive weapon, and common language, instrument of the decomposition of worm-eaten societies, a philosophy becomes the culture and the very nature of a class. These characteristics account for the rarity of epochs of philosophical creation, which can only occur in a determined historical and social context. Between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries there have only been in Sartre's opinion three moments of philosophical creation, marked by Descartes and Locke, Kant and Hegel, and finally Marx. In contrast to these philosophies, Sartre gives the name *ideologist* to the men who do not create like the great philosophers, but live on their creations, exploiting, arranging, using, and adapting them. And modestly the existentialist Sartre defines existentialism as an ideology, a parasitic system on the margin of knowledge.

If we stopped there, then it would seem that Sartre distinguishes the same difference of structure between Marxism and existentialism which we indicated, but inverts the terms. For him it is Marxism which is a philosophy, and existentialism an ideology. However, this change of vocabulary is not as decisive as it appears, as the following analyses show. Indeed, if the Marxism of Marx is a creative philosophy, the Marxism of present-day Marxists is for Sartre hardened and sterile. The contrast is perhaps more finely shaded : Marxism is creative in as far as it is not only the philosophy of Marx but that of the proletariat, in as far as it is the truth which suits our time. It preserves its creative and historical possibilities and may be a source of new hypotheses, moreover, if you will consider it as a critique, a method, and not as a dogma. But the Marxists, the Marxist ideologists, do not exploit its possibilities. It is existentialism, or at least that school which Sartre represents, which follows up the application of Marxism, which tests and demonstrates its fecundity. So living thought is on the side of existentialism, and sterile prating on the side of the official Marxists.

Sartre contrasts the analyses of Marx himself, seeking the concrete, with the stereotyped abstractions of his successors; he demonstrates the necessity of integrating into the living synthesis of an independent Marxism the contributions of psychoanalysis and of sociology, in order to constitute an anthropology: the doctrine of man remains the weak point of Marxism and represents the contribution and the task of existentialism.

If the comparison is legitimate in spite of these incongruities, it is so in so far as Marxism and existentialism remain the poles of attraction of contemporary thought, in so far as their dialogue continues. Their persistence and the persistence of their debate show that each of them fulfils a need, and that neither alone has succeeded in satisfying every need for everybody. What then are these requirements?

Marxist universalism

Marxism, which we do not here distinguish from communism, that is to say, which we consider as a movement of action and not as a movement of thought only, remains today the great or the only *source of hope* for many men, especially among the disinherited masses. This is due to the fact that it is the only coherent contemporary philosophy to affirm its faith in the progress of humanity, to give an optimistic meaning to our history. This is related at a deeper level perhaps with the fact that it is the only political philosophy which is deliberately *universalist*, which thinks problems out for all men, on a world scale. It claims to resolve the problems of humanity, to suppress everywhere the exploitation of man by man; it declares that it fights to procure bread, justice, dignity for all peoples. It is disputable whether this hope is well founded or misleading, whether these pretensions are sincere or deceitful, whether the universalism affirmed is authentic or whether it is the hypocritical mark of a slav imperialism. But the reality of this hope is not disputable, nor the disinterested devotion to their cause which it arouses in the militant.

Now no other political movement ¹ can claim that its activity aims at the general good of mankind. The politics of the United States has as its purpose the maintenance and increase of American power ; it seeks first the good of America. It is the same for the politics of Great Britain and of France, and so forth. The governments of the greatest countries have certainly a political program on a world scale, in so far as they have agents and interests in all countries, but they do not pretend to put first the interests of the whole world. Their perspective remains regional, particular.

Now we live in a world which, thanks to the techniques of production, of distribution, of communication, and of information becomes every day closer and more united, in a world in which economic and political solidarities are affirmed. In this world, on the other hand, the first effect of technical progress has been to increase the well-being of certain countries and the population of all, and to increase considerably the inequality of the standard of living of the peoples of the earth. Two-thirds of humanity do not eat enough to satisfy their hunger ; famine and under-nourishment, which used to be regarded as natural calamities, could in principle be conquered today by sciences and techniques : their persistence and their aggravation result from our indifference, and no longer from the hostility of nature. Hence, as long as Marxism is alone in claiming that its concern is to procure bread and equality for all men, it will keep its power to attract the unfortunate.

A philosophy of history

Marxism on the other hand presents itself as a *philosophy of history* and as a total philosophy ; it has an answer to all the

¹ There are of course other universalist forces in the contemporary world ; but knowledge and technique, if they permit a communion of understanding which is universal by right, do not guarantee unity of heart. Christianity, on the other hand, claims universality for itself, and represents itself as a power for reconciliation and union. But apart from the fact that this claim has still no political expression, it is belied on the level even of faith and ecclesiastical discipline by the disunion of Christians in practice and by the rivalry of the confessions. The believers who confess "one Lord, one faith, one baptism", and who declare that all men are brothers in Jesus Christ, cannot partake of the Last Supper together.

questions ; it provides an explanation and a line of conduct for every situation, theoretical or practical : moral and political life, the sciences, religion, the arts, education. This omniscience, this omnicompetence, are certainly in part illusory ; they are only achieved at the cost of sometimes gross simplifications, and the unity of Marxist doctrine is maintained now by the brutal denial of certain difficulties (and the authoritarian exclusion of contrary opinions), now by prodigies of mental acrobatics and the subtlety of a dialectic which is often no more than a mask for deception. But such as it is, and even if its unity depends only on passion, violence, or deceit, this system does produce a certain intellectual comfort ; it answers the need for understanding, it gives reassurance. Human societies have suffered too deep changes and have seen the rise of too many new problems, for the ancient traditions and the ancient philosophies to satisfy the mind, unless they undertake a fundamental remoulding for which they have not understood the need until too late. Add to this that the development of elementary education, the access of new classes and new peoples to culture makes them discontented with the ignorance or the traditions which satisfied them in the old days, without always giving them the equipment to master ever richer and more complex intellectual disciplines. Finally, the prestige of science, among those who see the results without always appreciating the subtleties and the uncertainties, helps to reinforce the seductions of a doctrine which claims to be scientific, and which deals out its affirmations with a dogmatism which is very far from the true scientific spirit, but much more apt to convince the half-educated.

In a word, Marxism gives its adepts the feeling that they understand the transformation of the present-day world and participate actively therein, in communion of thought and feeling with other enthusiasts. They have moreover the impression that their action and their sacrifices aim not at the power and domination of a group but at the liberation and happiness of all. For this reason, Marxism is in the last resort more than a scientific method or a philosophy ; uniting theory and practice, thought and action, it is a manner of life, a "Way" ; it is a faith ; it is, using the word without any pejorative intention, a myth which integrates within itself all disciplines and all activities, which

captures for its own profit the energies and aspirations which give a meaning to life by uniting the individual with the universe and with society.

Existentialism as a description of human solitude

Existentialist thought on its part has put the accent on solitude and the confusion of contemporary man. Its influence has gone outside the close circle of professional philosophers, of the technicians of thought, not only because several of its representatives have expressed their ideas in a literary form which is more accessible than the philosophical treatise, in the novel, the theatre, and the film, but because Europe was shaken to its foundations by war, and doubted its strength and its future, and because many of the doctrines and religions which had formerly given a meaning to life and allowed a distinction between good and evil, the permissible and the forbidden, had crumbled or been disqualified by their incapacity to guarantee the order and the safety of the city. The horrors of war, the barbarism of concentration camps, the utilization of science, wherein the nineteenth century had seen the instrument of man's happiness and progress, for man's destruction, enslavement, and degradation, had thrown every mind into confusion and despair. The universe seemed absurd ; Marxism, doctrine of hope and of progress, wore the hideous face of totalitarian doctrine, perverted the truth, and robbed man of his liberty. With no collective project, with no common tradition, many Europeans, disorientated and uprooted by war, found in existentialism what seemed to them a correct description of the absurdity of the world and the forsaken state of man ; the weakest found in it a justification of their evasion and their lack of morals ; the strongest drew from the lucidity of its analyses the courage of truth and the resolution to count upon themselves alone for a new meaning to life. The Marxists, advancing a sociological explanation of existentialism, as of all ideologies, see in it the expression of the international contradictions of the bourgeois and capitalist world, decadent and incapable of overcoming its crises. The partisans of existentialism will say that under cover of historical circumstances the latter has revealed a fundamental aspect of

the human predicament ; and whether they denounce in Marxism a new myth alienating man's liberty, or whether they see in it a doctrine which should be exact and fecund, but ill-served and distorted in practice by its partisans, they continue, whether to correct or to complete Marxism, to put the accent on individual destiny and the great ethical problems. In this way existentialist thought also responds to a real need of contemporary man, or at least helps him to become aware of it. The excess of scientific and technical, bureaucratic and socialist rationalization, paradoxically leads to such absurdities that man, disorientated, dehumanized and alienated in the collective and the mechanical, needs solitude if he is once more to become aware of his responsibility and possess or recreate the values and the purposes which will give a meaning to his destiny.

Christianity before Marxism and existentialism

Is any conclusion possible, and can I as a Christian arbitrate between Marxism and existentialism ? It is important to note here that Christianity is neither a philosophy nor an ideology whose doctrinal content, fixed once for all, could be compared to Marxist and existentialist doctrines for the purpose of making points of agreement and disagreement. However important dogmatic formulations may be (not forgetting that several dogmatic systems coexist and compete in Christendom), Christianity seems to us to be mainly a relationship of men with the living God, a way of life, a faith which is more truly described as belief in a person than as belief in a system (it is fair to add that such a conception of Christianity is itself "existentialist"). There are existentialist Christians and communist Christians. Doubtless the Christian faith is irreconcilable with an *unreserved* adherence either to atheistic Marxism, or to atheistic existentialism ; the Marxist or existentialist Christian not only regards his faith as a concrete obedience to Jesus Christ rather than as a rationalist system of the world, but he will regard the Marxism or existentialism to which he subscribes as a method of thought or an attitude to life rather than as a dogmatic system. Doubtless we must also say that a Christian because he is a Christian will not go as far with either Marxism or existentialism as to say that

man is the absolute creator of himself and his own god ; but that does not oblige him to reject certain analyses which either doctrine offers. These remarks limit the bearing of our conclusion : we do not claim to offer a dogmatic synthesis of conceptions which, as we have just said above, differ between themselves and from Christianity ; we just want to establish certain bearings for the purpose of our orientation.

A Christian critique of the Marxist interpretation of history

We shall borrow the principle, and sometimes the actual words of these final remarks, from a study published a few years ago by Paul Ricœur, in the *Review of Social Christianity*, and reproduced in his book, *History and Truth*¹. This study was on "Christianity and the Meaning of History". Its merit in our eyes is precisely that it distinguishes several levels in the reading of history, and allows the recognition of the simultaneous truth of several attitudes which neither exclude each other nor combine in a single system, because they are not of the same kind, nor are the fields of their respective validity on the same level.

On the first level, the history of man is the history of work and of tool-making, material and intellectual tools, both knowledge and know-how, equipment and institutions. On this level, human history is *one*, and it is the history of constant *progress*. But this progress is impersonal and anonymous ; it does not concern the concrete life of suffering and willing individuals, nor the drama of civilizations which perish. *Marxism is useful and fruitful as one of the working hypotheses which make it possible to interpret history on this level.*

On another level, history is ambiguous ; it is primarily on the individual and not on the collective level, since every man has to act out his own life, begins again at zero and faces alone his salvation and his death through his concrete decisions ; *and it is to this moral and existential aspect of our attitudes that existentialism directs our attention.*

But it must be added that between the collective progress of humanity on the technical plane and the individual adventure,

¹ Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1955. We shall also use the same author's article on *Le paradoxe politique* published in the May 1957 number of the review *Esprit*.

always uncertain, always beginning afresh, advancing through crises, events, decisions, there is in relation even to collective history another level of interpretation than that of progress. There is a history which is at once concrete and ambiguous : that of the plurality of civilizations, which are born and die and pass through crises as individuals do ; a history within which coexist several series of phenomena : economic, social, political, cultural ; and along these lines the crises, the growths, the regressions do not necessarily coincide. History is multiple, and the part which events and personalities play makes it impossible to rationalize it altogether, even with the help of dialectics. Here is *one of the limitations* of the Marxist interpretation : it underestimates this ambiguity of history and the culpability of man which makes its mark along with his greatness in his struggle for power. So in particular, Marxism tends to reduce political alienation to the economic alienation of which it would be only an effect ; and then for the ever urgent problem of the control of the state it substitutes the thesis of the decline of the state : when communism has triumphed everywhere, when the classless society has been established, when there is collective ownership of the means of production, then all kinds of oppression and exploitation will vanish of themselves, and the state, which is only an instrument of oppression in the service of the owning class, will disappear. While we await this happy day, communism makes the best of the power of the state, uses it, and reinforces it. But is not appropriation one of the forms of the power of man over man, rather than the source ? And is not money one means of domination among others ? Perhaps a similar spirit of domination shows itself in exploitation through wealth, and in bureaucratic and police tyranny, and in intellectual dictatorship, and in clericalism. Here existentialism *and* Christianity, concerned with both the ambiguity and the culpability of man, could neither of them be satisfied with a conception of man which reduces him to *homo oeconomicus* and does not adequately express the specificity of the properly *political* dimension of his life.

Christianity will accept the general intention and the optimism of a Marxist reading of man's technical history : man's vocation according to Scripture is indeed to possess and to

cultivate the earth ; there is no lack of respect for technique and work as such ; nature is not sacred, she is creature, and it is not irreligious to try to utilize her. Christianity will only remind you that if the exploitation of nature is in itself lawful, the exploitation of *man* is the sin, and concern for the service of men, and not the desire for prestige or domination, should be the motive and criterion of every technical enterprise.

Christianity will accept from an existentialist reading of the individual adventure of man its affirmation of ambiguity, of the precariousness and the responsibility of the individual ; it will not agree that man is, as Sartre would have it, the creator of his own values ; but it will recognize his responsibility for directing his life by his decisions.

The Christian dimension of history

Finally, outside the technical history of humanity which Marxism explores and pursues, beyond the plane of decision and crises, of mingled grandeur and guilt in which is found the existentialist interpretation of the historicity of man, Christianity determines a third level of understanding of history, independent of the two preceding ones, the level of hope. The hope of salvation on which the Christian lives, brings to his reflections on history a dimension which is foreign to Marxism and to existentialism as such. The knowledge of divine history, faith in the Lordship of God over the world and human history, allows the Christian to hope that all history has a meaning, that events and catastrophes are mysteriously led by God or tolerated in his patience until the coming of his Kingdom. This meaning is not known ; it remains mysterious ; the unity of history is not grasped except in hope.

Technical progress is the rational meaning of history ; ambiguity represents what is *irrational* in history ; the meaning of history for hope is supra-rational ; there is a *meaning*, history is not fundamentally absurd — a divine plan, a benevolent plan is being accomplished in it : such is the affirmation of faith. *But this meaning is hidden* ; it will only be known at the last day. *Because there is a meaning*, the Christian is protected, at the very heart of the tragic in history, against despair, abandonment,

sterile resignation to injustice and catastrophe. There always remains something to be done, opportunities to seize, tasks to undertake. Because there is a meaning, we can and we must on the other hand attempt explanatory outlines, try to understand fragments of history, the consequences of events, of situations : Marxism will be used as a method of investigation. *But because the meaning is hidden*, because the mystery of history is never completely revealed, the Christian will distrust any system which claims to give a total and definitive explanation ; he will beware of all theoretical or political fanaticism ; he will take care to look at history from many angles, to correct one interpretation by another ; he will not let himself be shut up in a system ; he will keep himself far from the abstract, summary, and fanatical dogmatism of Marxism. Thus, faith in the mysterious meaning of history makes the Christian more sensitive to the explanatory *intention* of Marxism and puts him on his guard against the *pretension* of the system to explain everything ; it makes him more sensitive on the other hand to the ambiguity of history, which existentialism has the *intention* to reveal ; and protects him against the *temptation* of the absurd and of despair, to which existentialism has sometimes yielded.

The Ambiguities of Marxist Doctrine

CHARLES TAYLOR

Marxism today is in crisis as it has never been before. In the past, beside the dissension and division of the various schools, there has always been a systematized and confident official Marxism — first that of the German Social Democratic Party, later that of the Bolsheviks. The break-down of Stalinism, however, has removed this one fixed point, the one leadstone of the Marxist tradition. By unanimous agreement certain changes or “refinements” have to be made, but there is no coherent agreed position among any sizable group of Marxist thinkers on what changes should be made. Under Stalin, Marxism became one rigid self-supporting system which was used to justify everything. Now that certain rents have been made in the “seamless garment”, it is difficult to know where to stop.

Among the current restatements of Marxism, however, certain leading ideas emerge. Some claim that Marxism is a method of analysis, others that it is a body of scientific doctrine. A third group claims that it is a humanist view of man and the human condition — the only fully humanist view, they would add. These three approaches may not appear incompatible one with another, but as the discussion progresses, one begins to suspect that the original doctrine itself was not entirely consistent, and that the attempt to clear away the Stalinist excrescences may strike at the roots of Marxism itself. Against certain vulgarizers of Marxism, it has often been claimed that Marx’s materialism is not another form of historical determinism. And this claim is, in a sense, justified. Marx himself said, after hearing certain distorted, determinist

versions of his own teaching: "All I know is that I am not a Marxist". He always insisted that this was an *historical* materialism. He rejected the idea of human nature, seen as a fixed series of propensities. He held, on the contrary, that human nature as well as man's environment changed radically in history. Non-historical materialism was, to Marx, a kind of idealism ¹.

But the sense of this critique of "vulgar" materialism is lost if we interpret Marx's doctrine as a kind of historical determinism, the view that men change because their conditions change. If this were all Marx was saying, he would have no reason to attack thinkers like Feuerbach as "idealist". He attacked them explicitly because they could not account for historical change and development, and his critique is valid against any form of determinism, mechanistic or historical. "The materialist doctrine that men are the products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are the products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men that change circumstances and that the educator himself needs to be educated. Hence this doctrine necessarily ends by dividing society into two parts, of which one is superior to society", that is, it ends up assuming that some men fall outside the pattern of determinism and can thus modify social conditions according to plan. It therefore entails a covert idealist premise. "The coincidence of changing circumstances and of changing human activity or man's changing himself can only be conceived and rationally understood as *revolutionizing practice* ²."

Marx's recognition of the importance of human activity

The concept of "practice" was for Marx central to his idea of history. It means, in Marx, human activity which is both physical and conscious, "sensuous and critical" at the same time, activity by which man puts his own order — a human

¹ FEUERBACH, *German Ideology*, p. 164.

² *Theses on Feuerbach*, p. 3.

order—into the world. In his criticism of Feuerbach, he constantly attacks the conception of man as a “sensible object” and substitutes the term “sensible activity”. Thus Marx does not see human consciousness as a kind of eddy on the sea of history, as an epiphenomenal series of images running alongside the “real” history, the development of the mode of production. For this development takes place only as a result of human activity, and human consciousness is inseparable from this activity. In his polemic against idealism, Marx is not trying to uphold some form of determinism, but to put human consciousness back into the context of human life, of “conscious being”. In this context man’s thought is conditioned by the activity of which it is a part, and in turn by the material circumstances in which this activity is carried on. Thus man’s consciousness is conditioned by the necessity to produce the means for his livelihood, and hence also by the circumstances in which this production is carried out. Man’s thought can change, develop, broaden, but only by changing the circumstances by which this thought is conditioned. A fully developed human consciousness cannot exist prior to the full growth of human civilization, guiding its development, as Hegel believed. Human thought must be incarnated in things, in the human organism, in spoken and written language, in man’s artefacts (see *German Ideology*, “Language is practical consciousness”). But at the same time, material circumstances do not progress magically, bringing a development of consciousness in their wake. Man himself changes this condition under which he must live and think. And in changing his mode of life he changes his mode of thought. Thus where other radical thinkers of his day called on man to revolutionize his ideas and attitudes, Marx held, as he put it in the famous enigmatic phrase: “Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it.”

Thus, from this point of view, the well-known theory of the base and the superstructure of history means, not that history is divided into two streams, of which one is a simple by-product of the other, even if by some refinement they are said to interact, but that man’s activity is primarily directed towards producing the means of life, that activity in this sphere

is the dynamic force in history, the initiator of new developments. "Men have a history because they have to produce their livelihood, and that in a certain specific manner: this is dictated by their physical make-up as well as their consciousness" (*German Ideology*).

This accent on human activity and in particular on the activity of producing is the basis of Marx's humanism. By his work man transforms his material surroundings in such a way as to make them an expression of his humanity. In this way he transforms his own nature and becomes himself more human. For Marx, the ear which can listen to music is more fully human than that which can only hear natural sounds, the eye which can look at a painting more human than that which can only look on nature. Man becomes more human by his creations, by fashioning nature to his ends. Human society, which is a condition of this production, is itself transformed in the process from a "sheep-like" gregariousness to a brotherhood of men. This development requires, however, a division of labour and hence a class society, which introduces the struggle between man and man, and the alienation of man from the human nature he is forming, which will ultimately be overcome with the proletarian revolution.

The break-down of the dialectical view of history

It is clear that this promethean conception of man has no place for a historical determinism which would relegate human consciousness and thus human achievement to the role of "reflection" of the "real" material forces which make history. Thus, to leave aside Stalin's theories which need no comment, when we read, for example, Lenin's "social consciousness reflects social being" or "social being is independent of social consciousness" (these quotes could be multiplied many times), we feel at first that Marxism has undergone some crude distortion. And yet we find formulations which scarcely differ in Marx: for example, "The ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind and translated into forms of thought" (*Capital*).

What is the source of this seeming equivocation, one might say contradiction in Marx, of which so much was to be made by successors? To say that it was simply due to inattention or to careless thinking is to credit him with too little. He could not simply have lapsed into "vulgar" materialism without noticing it. The root is elsewhere, and we find it in his earliest writings alongside the original theory of dialectical materialism.

In the famous Manuscript of 1844, we find the following strange utterance: "Communism is the solution to the enigma of history, and is conscious of itself as that solution". This sentence throws aside at one stroke the definition of historical materialism that Marx had elaborated. Historical materialism implies that man makes his own history, that, although his thought and action are conditioned, he is nevertheless consciously directing his own destiny in however limited and fragmentary a manner. Men have illusions, they have distorted and partial views of their condition, that is, they labour under "ideologies", but they always understand to some extent what they are about. Man's consciousness progresses in history, his view of the world becomes deeper and fuller, and history is in this sense a progress towards truth. But historical materialism rules out the possibility that man will ever achieve the complete truth, the ultimate and all-embracing view of human history and the forces which move it. To speak of "*the* solution to *the* enigma of history" is to imply that there is one question and one answer, one true rational order which unfolds itself in history and which could in a sense have been foretold from the beginning. But if men make their own history, then there is not one question but many, and not one solution but an infinite series of solutions. They are, of course, related to each other. Some may be deeper and more comprehensive than others. Relative to the consciousness of one age that of a previous age may seem to embody only a partial and fragmentary view of the human condition; we often know more about the real trend of events than did those who were caught up in them. But if there is one real, underlying course of events which only remains to be discovered, then the belief that men have impressed their own form on history is an illusion. In

reality they were all playing their parts according to the ultimate correct script.

But if communism, as the solution to the enigma, deprives pre-communist man of his role in history, it gives an exaggerated importance to communist man. For to "know the solution" is to have a consciousness which is not conditioned at all, it is to have a view which can never be seen as partial and incomplete by posterity. Marx's doctrine of communism, therefore, conflicts with the dialectical view of history in two related ways. It makes the consciousness of all previous societies irrelevant to their development, and it makes the conditions of communist society irrelevant to its consciousness.

According to historical materialism men are both conditioned and conscious, both the product of their circumstances and the creators of those circumstances. No man can say the last word on his own age; "just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so we cannot judge... a period... by its own consciousness" (Preface to the *Critique of Political Economy*). But neither can we be sure that our judgement on a period is the final one.

It may be more complete and more profound, but to say it is *the* complete and final one is to say that our predecessors did not really know what they were doing, that whatever they thought, they were destined to play a certain role, that they were the creatures of the conditions they lived in, while our thought is freed from all conditions. The dialectical view of history is broken in two: we no longer see all men as both conditioned and conscious, but we see the men in one period as conditioned and those in another as conscious. Neither one nor the other is compatible with historical materialism.

This "absolute standpoint" is implicit in the claim to formulate "laws of development" for society. To formulate a law is to imply not only that society has developed in such and such a way, but that it must do so. But this means that the view that men consciously make their own history, in the sense implied in historical materialism, is illusory, and it means also that those who posit the laws are, in a sense, outside history, are not themselves part of the same history. Thus when Stalin says "... the science of the history of society,

despite all the complexity of the phenomena of social life, can become as precise a science, as, let us say, biology...", it would seem that he has stopped outside dialectical and historical materialism, despite the title of the work from which this quotation is drawn. But Marx himself speaks of "...the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science...". This is perhaps why Marx begins to refer to the past development, no longer as history, but as the "pre-history of human society".

The destructive effect of Marxian absolutism

Marx, therefore, did not relapse into a kind of vulgar materialism, but recreated in a different form the error of Hegel. He believed, just as Hegel did, that he had found "the solution to the enigma of history", the course that history was bound to take, that lay implicit in human society from the beginning. But this implied downgrading of all past history (and contemporary history in so far as not made by communism) to the rank of a "pre-history". The result was that the cruder model of the base and superstructure of society that the polemic against Feuerbach had so successfully rebutted was rehabilitated, and the idea of two streams of history, one an epiphenomenon of the other, was born. Marxism has been plagued ever since by this contradiction in its central doctrines.

Why did Marx allow this contradiction to remain in his work? The view that the dialectical theory of the young Marx was allowed to fall by the wayside in his later years cannot be substantiated. The elements of the later view are to be found in his earlier writing as well. It is more likely that Marx was led to overlook the contradiction because he wanted to stress that the proletarian revolution would alter the entire human condition, would completely free man from all fetters. He believed that the coming of communism would end human alienation and would represent the complete domination of man over nature. It was the role of capitalist society to make nature over in man's image. Once its historic mission was completed, it would only remain for the workers to overthrow

bourgeois society for man to come into his own. But this eschatological vision was not compatible with the view of man as conditioned ; it could only find a place in a quite different doctrine of man, whereby man could not only remake his human nature but could even transcend the conditions which originally limited his thought and his action. But, on this view, human history begins with communism : what comes before is a pre-history in which the developments of the new man must be implicit. Marx's promethean faith, pushed to its extreme limit, led him to deny the freedom of men in past ages, in favour of the unlimited creativity of communist man.

How far the roots of the present crisis in Marxism go back can be seen from the fact that what Marx did in theory, Stalin did in practice. For that very reason Stalinism is an inadequate and misleading name for the rigid dogmatic Marxism of the latter-day Bolsheviks. The disjunction of the dialectical view of history, whereby the active creative element in man was located in one group, the proletariat — and later the Communist Party — and the conditioned element in the rest of mankind, became even more evident after the Communist Party came to power in 1917. A small revolutionary *élite* was in control of a vast, underdeveloped country with a small and largely uneducated working class. The revolution which was expected in the more advanced countries of Western Europe did not occur. A small group of leaders had therefore to build communism in what was virtually a feudal society. The new order had not been able to ripen "in the womb of the old". History had to be wrenched out of course. Leninism therefore stressed the voluntarist aspect of Marxism, the image of communist man forging a new nature out of the debris of the old society. Correspondingly, it stressed the inertness, the lack of consciousness of non-communist man. The Bolsheviks took almost the attitude of engineers towards society. They looked to Marxism for the "laws of development of society" in order to mould it. Thus a revolutionary practice was accompanied by a body of rigid, almost mechanistic laws. The disjunction became complete. The development of *bourgeois* society could be explained and predicted without any reference whatever

to the ideas or intentions of its protagonists, but any attempt to understand communist society from any standpoint other than that of its leaders was castigated as "*bourgeois* objectivism".

The new humanist revival in Marxism has rejected the dogma of Stalinism, but the view of Marxism as a "science of history" remains. This, however, is also incompatible with the humanist element in Marxism, with the image of man as the maker of his own history. But to reject this implies more than a critique of the work of Stalin, or even of Lenin; it implies a thoroughgoing reassessment of Marx as well. Marxist humanism will have to strip away the exaggerated claims on behalf of communist man in order to reformulate the radical critique of capitalist society that Marx made. As long as the image of communist man and the view of history it implies continues to depreciate the human status of those men who are still living in a "pre-history", the real force of the Marxist critique of present society will remain hidden. Only at this price can it become once more a dynamic approach to the world.

But a new Marxist humanism may have to revise Marx in other respects as well. The history of Stalinism brought to the fore, among others, two vital questions to which Marx has no unequivocal answer. First, if man's greatness lies in the fact that he makes his own nature in history, what importance can we give to those men and women who do not participate in this process, or who even resist it? In other words, if we hold that man, as a species, is the origin of his own value, are we bound to reject the human status of individual "reactionaries", to condemn them to the "rubbish heap of history" in thought and attitude if not in deed? Secondly, if the brotherhood of man is made possible only through man's productive activity and can come only when man has achieved complete control over nature, how should we act when, as in the Soviet Union, the achievement of this control over nature seems to require, in the short run at least, the negation of brotherhood, when the condition of rapid development is the rejection of just social relations?

Both these questions touch on the promethean image of man, which is central to Marxism. Marx's dominant aim was

perhaps to show the greatness of man as a worker and to establish the dignity and humanity of work. But the exalting of man as a worker has served as a justification for oppression and a negation of the value of comradeship and justice. Are these distortions essential to Marxism or only accidental? This is the question which Marxists must answer if they are to rediscover the original humanist content of their faith.

Marxism : an Ideology or a Political Tool ?

ALAN R. BOOTH

In order to get this question into some clear focus, we shall have to limit the subject, at least geographically. For "Marxism" is a word that is used to cover, explain, or invigorate the policies and aspirations of many different groups in the contemporary world — revolutionary undergrounds or controlling minorities, from the jungles of Malaya to the "People's Republics" of Eastern Europe ; and it is probable that our answer would be significantly different according to the area chosen for attention. So it is proposed here to look first at the situation in Russia, so far as we can estimate it, because Russia remains the great centre of power in the communist world, and further because the question normally arises in an attempt to understand the present mind and future action of Russia. What Russia is and does will control what happens in Eastern Europe. How far China is following the Russian road is a further immense question that must be regretfully left outside the scope of this article.

Marxism and the Russian search for coherence

As soon, however, as this limitation of focus is accepted, one faces the question whether the phenomenon we know as Russian communism is a product of something essentially Russian, arising out of the dark and often tragic history of that great land, and how far it is in fact a consequence of Marxist doctrine. For this doctrine is essentially a product of European intellectual reflection on the problems of Europe's industrial revolution, and it is at least odd that it has found its breeding ground on Europe's margin, in a country notable for the backwardness of its industrial development, where

therefore the problems for which Marx sought solution had as yet barely appeared.

This curious fact is only understandable against a background of Russian nineteenth-century thinking¹. It was half way through the last century when Russia began to discover itself as a power on the world stage, exposed to the weather of intellectual ferment and political debate, a potential giant all too conscious of its cultural inadequacy for such a role. In the confusion of this experience the Russian mind turned in upon itself, and sought a key to the understanding of the modern world which would give unity and coherence to experience and discover the role which Russia was destined to play in history. Almost universally in intellectual circles the search was for a total and comprehensive philosophy of life, in which every part of a man's life could be fitted and find significance. Christian theological thinking was not strong or sophisticated enough to play a great part in this search, and it was German idealists and French social philosophers who captured allegiance. But a certain Russian fanaticism was added, a fanaticism for coherence, which passionately denied that human life could be effectively made up of a variety of disconnected pursuits and areas of interest, each with its own autonomy and independence. All must be made subject to the one truth, the one key to life. We might guess that this attitude of mind had Christian roots, away down the line, but we can see also that it is in essence totalitarian, and in the service of any human philosophy or power, it is in principle tyrannical. It provided an especially fertile seed-bed for Marxism, when it arrived.

Russian Marxism as an "ideology"...

And no doubt it was Lenin who gave to the teachings of Marx that missionary dynamic and ideological zeal that has produced the modern communist power. For him and his contemporaries, the clue to objective reality had been found

¹ For much of what follows I am indebted to the article by Isaiah Berlin, "The Silence in Russian Culture", in *Foreign Affairs*, October 1957.

and only needed intelligent, technical application for the total solution of mankind's social and political problems to be achieved. Where in Europe Marxism stood for a set of social, economic, or political beliefs, in Russia it became a total way of life, compulsory and all-penetrating just because it was *the Truth*. This is what led to the authoritarianism of the Bolshevik revolution, which has remained grim reality to the present day. And at this stage one can well pin the label "ideology" to Russian Marxism. But it is well to note that a very important element of that totalitarianism sprang from earlier Russian thought and life, and that the struggle with a less totalitarian form of Marxism, more characteristic of its Western European formulation, still continues in the battle with various kinds of Titoism and "separate roads to socialism".

...and as a means to power

But of course one of the snags about all total philosophies of life is that events belie them, and even before the October Revolution much of orthodox Marxist doctrine had become riddled with holes. It became clear to Lenin's successor, Stalin, for instance, that the early world revolution predicted by the prophet was going to be long a-coming. Meantime, the power of the Party in Russia, and the power of Russia in the world had to be established beyond attack, and means found for keeping up the tempo of a revolutionary movement during the wandering in the wilderness, before the Promised Land was reached. For Stalin, who was no intellectual, descriptions of the Promised Land, and even arguments about the direction of the road there, were infinitely less immediate than the consolidation of power positions so as to retain control of events. The distant objective and generalized debates on principle were much less pressing than keeping a personal position at the head of the column and establishing defences against interference from without. No doubt Stalin believed in the ultimate decay of the capitalist world and the inevitability of Russia's enemies making one fatal error after another — they were groping in darkness while the Communist Party walked freely in the light. But the genuine intellectual ground of the new

ideology had no fascination for this manipulator of power, and indeed he found it necessary to clamp down on the ideological conversation on the grounds that any free, speculative thought was a menace to monolithic power. It is this fact that gives colour to the belief that Russia has abandoned a genuine (if disastrous and idolatrous) ideological evangelism for the simple pursuit of power and hegemony.

The post-Stalin evolution

But is this not too simple? Even apart from uncertainties about the precise nature of the post-Stalin evolution in Russia, we can see some qualifications that must be made. To begin with, the contrast between Marxism as an ideology and as a power tool must not be made too sharply. Belief and conviction issue in action, and action involves power. And secondly, we must make some distinction between those who carry supreme power in Russia, and the next lower grades in Soviet society, intellectuals, industrial managers, and technicians, who must be carried along one way or another.

As to the first qualification, the best guess appears to be that, in the struggles for succession since Stalin's death, the ideological debate has become a mere weapon in the general battle for personal position among the Soviet hierarchy. Policies tend to be judged by their practicability and effectiveness in securing political advantage (which includes public esteem) and doctrine is bent or selected to suit. But still, obeisance has to be made to the sacred writings, and this necessity is further enforced by the existence of other centres of communist power in the world, notably China.

As to the second, we must not imagine that the fascination of the Marxist dream has entirely vanished throughout Soviet society. It is true that the personal plums offered in Soviet society are a wonderful antidote to ideological passion, but on the other hand we must constantly remember that the drive and dynamic of the whole vastly costly Soviet experiment has been supplied by this dream, and it cannot be shattered without shaking to the roots the regime built upon it. Even the rulers are in some degree prisoners of Marxist hopes. While

Stalin lived, and since, the rulers have been not only the great controllers of power but also the establishers of ideological orthodoxy, and their shifts and changes have indeed spread widely a mood of cynical conformity to the latest "line". But it is not clear that the Russian mind has yet reached the abyss of considering the possibility that no genuine Marxist line does exist somewhere, beyond the tricks of a ruling oligarchy to distort and manage.

The persistence of the ideological hope

The experience of meeting members of visiting Russian delegations of great variety, who come to the United Kingdom on technical and cultural visits, appears to confirm the view that the vast majority of intelligent and able Russian citizens use thought processes dominated quite sincerely by the Marxist world view, and remain devotees of that ideology. And the testimony of Leonhardt in his *Child of the Revolution*, is not only to the cynical wink and wry smile of those who have learned the techniques of quick conformity to the latest wave in the party line, but also to the persistent and basic acceptance of certain Marxist assumptions about the world which make Western democracy continue to appear utterly effete and irrelevant. Rulers in all nations evoke a certain cynical realism in those ruled, but that does not necessarily involve the abandonment of the ideological framework of the society over which they have power.

The argument thus far raises the question again whether the alternatives proposed in the title are really alternatives, or are correlates. Marx claimed to predict the course of historical development — Marxists both enjoy the contemplation of this inevitability, and also use power to hasten and simplify its consummation. In the process, power builds up around certain nations and personalities, and it becomes impossible to disentangle, for instance, the strands of Russian messianism from those of Marxist evangelism — the reality is in fact a compound, as it is also a compound of idealism and a lust to dominate (a compound by no means confined to the communist

world). But the strand of ideological hope remains significant and exercises a real influence on the exercise and pursuit of power.

The Christian obligation

A more interesting distinction can be made between all this and a certain element in the Marxist tradition of the rest of Europe — the distinction between a power-operated ideology and an acceptance of Marxism as a useful contribution to social and political — even philosophic — thinking, open to serious criticism and revision. There is, I believe, a Christian obligation which is by no means yet exhausted, to heed the criticism of the forms and performance of Western democratic society levelled by certain left-wing critics who have drunk deep at Marxist fountains. But the acceptance of this obligation is forever threatened by the equal duty to resist to the uttermost the attempt in the communist world, under Russian leadership and influence, to find in a very inadequate philosophy of life an idol to which the life of man should be sacrificed. This requires us to be resolute in resistance to the sinister, power-hungry ideology that threatens our world, and also humble and penitent in listening to the criticism of the Western world which is properly made by our fellow human beings in communist lands. This delicate and complex balance is one which perhaps Christians alone know how to preserve. They are tempted, with their contemporaries, to abandon the task and come down firmly on one side or the other — with Mr. Dulles or Professor Hromadka. I believe both to be blind guides in this respect, seeking to turn aside the judgement of God from themselves by resting on the failures of others. God is our hope, and not a Marxist millenium; and he stands presently in judgement upon all our societies wherein his children are unable to find their true manhood.

Christian and Communist Students in Japan

YOSHIEKI IISAKA

Only a handful of students are members of either the Christian Church or the Communist Party in Japan. But there are not a few students who are interested in Christianity as a cultural heritage or as a branch of existentialist philosophy. And there are vast numbers of students who think in terms of Marxist communism. There are few countries, except those which are actually communist, where Marxism has such a tremendous influence upon students.

Faith and action

One of the most remarkable characteristics common to Christianity and communism is their stress upon the indispensable relationship between faith or thought and the group or organization in which it is embodied. There is no dualism of spirit and body in Christian faith, as is the case with Greek thought. Christian faith demands a concrete "body", that is, the Christian Church. Faith and Church are each other's *sine qua non*. Communism has a similar characteristic. This system of thought cannot be separated from the existence of the Communist Party. To unite, to organize, are the keynotes of communism. In this dynamic dialectic of thought and group lies the history-moving force of Christianity and communism.

However, in Japan, thought does not bind itself to the group. Here man thinks as a discrete individual cut off from association with others. He thinks in Marxist terms, but he does not like to be affiliated with the Party or any other similar organization because this means the curtailment of his freedom. He is content to be a free spectator. A man may feel a deep interest in Christianity, but he will not go to church. He feels

this is superfluous. Nor has the cultural environment in Japan been favourable to the formation of voluntary groups or associations. Political authoritarianism and the feudalistic social structures have hindered it. On the other hand, ongoing rapid social modernization is eroding the ties of older communities, casting people out into a mass-society which is the aggregate of isolated individuals.

Marxism among students

The university itself is no longer a community ; the campus does not constitute the centre of student life. Students find themselves part of "the lonely crowd". Economic insecurity increases their anxiety. In this situation, Marxism becomes for them a refuge from psychological distress. With its pseudo-religious flavour, its *Weltanschauung*, and its view of history which provides concrete prescriptions for action, it is a complete system of belief which gives a certain sense of security to its adherents.

In a rapidly changing society, the urgent need for science and technology makes for a faith in scientific rationalism. This simple faith is easily combined with Marxism, which itself professes to be scientific and positivist. Indeed, Marxism seems to provide a far more cogent and persuasive analysis of the social situation in underdeveloped countries than any other system of thought. It imparts to those who believe in it a passion for social justice and an eschatological hope.

Moreover, the academic elaboration of Marxist theories in Japan, with which there is nothing in other countries to be compared, gives students a kind of intellectual satisfaction. Thus, Marxism provides those students who suffer from anxiety with a sort of defence mechanism which makes it possible for them to escape from it. In an unstable situation, determined radicalism has great attraction. Among students it is a sign of courage and a way to prestige. But, owing to the above-mentioned gulf between thought and action which exists in Japanese society, their radicalism remains in the realm of thought, without being translated into action. So Marxist students in Japan are radicals in thought, conservatives in action. Their frustra-

tions often find expression in philosophical radicalism. Moreover, their radicalism has a time limit, as they can afford to remain radicals only as long as they are students. Once graduated, they are turned by the unavoidable pressure of society into the politically indifferent class of white-collar workers. Of course, we cannot deny the existence of serious communist students, even if they are only a few. But their efforts are usually directed towards organizing and manipulating the lukewarm Marxist students, though they are not always successful, as they cannot understand their psychology.

Christianity among students

The same can be said about Christian students. Christianity, too, has a time limit. Students, especially those who have no connection with a church, leave their faith after graduation, even though they may have been very active members of the student "Y" or SCA. A pagan background and a too busy daily life are enough to make them forget the ultimate problems of human life. Theological study is of a high level among Christian students, but in some cases it may be a kind of escape from the social responsibility implied in Christian faith. One subject which is widely discussed in summer schools of the Japanese SCM is "Fellowship". This betrays their feeling of an urgent need to fight against the danger of losing fellowship among themselves, instead of going out to bring the message to other fellow students.

Relationships between Christian and communist students

Among students, Marxism is far more popular than Christianity. Students baptized by scientific rationalism identify any religion with myth and superstition, and easily accept the Marxist criticism of religion, which history shows to be partly true, that it is the ideology of the ruling class. Moreover, communism proposes to solve social problems, while Christianity seems to occupy itself mainly with such ultimate problems as life, death, and sin. In areas of rapid social change, the solution of social problems is most urgent, and for this reason, communism

is more appealing for students. They blame Christianity for not having a social program. Under these circumstances, it is more difficult, and therefore requires more courage, to confess one's Christian faith than to declare oneself a communist.

In post-war Japan, a new phase in the relationship between Christian and communist students developed. Just after the end of the war, there was lively controversy between them. But soon both realized that controversy for its own sake was not productive, and that there were many things which must be done without wasting time in mere discussion. This realization was prompted by two decisive events — the emergence of the People's Republic of China and the Peace Movement.

The example of China

When China undertook the great task of building a new state and society under communist leadership, both Christians and communists in Japan were confronted not with an abstract theoretical problem as before, but with a practical one. Chinese communism went its own way, using indigenous methods which gave it flexibility. The process of its development helped the Japanese to see the error of dogmatism into which they were apt to fall. In the past several thousand years of Chinese history, had there ever been a government which fed the whole population? The European criticism of communism that it suppresses freedom does not hold here, for Asian people have known nothing in the past but feudal oppression and colonial domination. They have never realized the concept and value of freedom which is the most important heritage of Western civilization. Asians do not feel much psychological repugnance to communism, as do Europeans, even when it is highly authoritarian in its practice. What they fear most is starvation and death. Several hundred thousand lives are lost in one flood; millions are driven to death by starvation in one drought. Faced with this hard fact, people will support that government which emancipates them from this threat. And Mao's government is it! It has fed six hundred million people, which was the minimum essential for social justice in China. Since the Amsterdam Assembly of the World Council of Churches (1948), the social

responsibilities of the Church have been strongly emphasized. Now Japanese Christians are beginning to learn from the Chinese example the possibility of cooperation with communists to establish social justice. They see that only the prophetic insight given by faith, which makes it possible to read the signs of the time, can make such realistic cooperation possible.

The Peace Movement

The Peace Movement in Japan is a nation-wide concern of people who have experienced the devastation of war and the formidable effects of the atom bomb. It is not a mere expression of communist strategy. Students form the most active part of this movement. It is composed of three wings: anti-A and H bombs, anti-rearmament, and anti-foreign military bases. In each movement, Christian students unite with communist students for the cause, agreeing that the preservation of peace is not the mere instrument of a fighting political ideology, but the indispensable condition of humanity's existence in the future. They know there are many differences between them. They know, too, that in spite of these, toleration, which is both religious and political wisdom, teaches them the necessity and possibility of dynamic cooperation. Christians base toleration upon Christ's love. Communists may rest it on the humanism in which they believe. But only Christians will know that Christ died even for communists. And in the light of this conviction, the problem of Christian and communist students in Japan depends not on how the latter deal with the former, but how the former meet the latter in love.

“Evangelische Studentengemeinde” in the German Democratic Republic

A Student Pastor

Work for Jesus Christ in the colleges and universities of the German Democratic Republic is done under the same conditions as everywhere in the world, if the situation is looked at in the perspective of eternity: the message of the Old and the New Testament is preached and interpreted; decisions are made for or against Jesus Christ, or — and this is the same as the latter — no decision is made at all. In this ultimate theological sense there are no favourable or unfavourable situations in this world. The judgement and mercy of God find their way independently of specific conditions of life. The repeated realization of this is the humiliation, joy, and consolation of the Christian, wherever he may live.

In spite of this independence of external conditions, we must not overlook the fact that work for Jesus Christ is done in a specific environment. Language, race, climate, the educational system, political and cultural circumstances, and certain long-established traditions influence and mark this work. These are truisms, but we must not forget them when describing the situation of the Christian student in Eastern Germany, which, politically and ideologically, is characterized mainly by the philosophy of dialectical materialism. For we are too inclined to overlook — above all in Germany — the similarities and differences, apart from those of a political and ideological nature, which exist between East and West. Life is much too varied to be defined only in terms of East and West. It is in this light that the following article must be read. Otherwise ideological walls will arise between the members of the one Church of Jesus Christ and divide them needlessly.

The organization

Around 1938 Christian students in Germany were forbidden by the Nazi government to come together except in close connection with the church. Thus, small groups were formed at all German universities under student pastors, who had been active in student work for some time. After 1945 this form of work was continued in both Eastern and Western Germany, because it had proved successful. A special office for the SCM in Eastern Germany was established in Berlin, and is directly related to the Evangelical Church of Germany. The separation between church and state in the German Democratic Republic has brought about a closer relationship between the SCM and the individual state churches. For some years, the Evangelical Church statutes have contained paragraphs defining exactly the character and purpose of SCM work, and in this way it is possible to carry on work among students. In spite of the closer connection with the large Evangelical Churches, a few students from Free Churches, primarily Methodists and Baptists, participate actively in SCM work, and its ecumenical character has been maintained.

Relationship to government and universities

The preaching of the Gospel and individual pastoral care are carried on among students at institutions and universities sponsored by the government. However, there is no official contact between the SCM and these institutions. As a consequence of the separation of church and state, meetings of the SCM can be held only on church premises. Therefore, during recent years announcements of such meetings have no longer been posted on the blackboards of East German universities. On the other hand, government authorities have again and again recognized the existence of the SCM by granting printing licences, travel permits, and other government licences.

Yet the true nature of the SCM has not always been recognized, and it has often been looked upon as a movement competing with the only government-sponsored youth organiza-

tion, the Free German Youth. During the years 1952-53, several SCM members had difficulties with the government because of this misunderstanding. The government has since recognized its error. Moreover, the majority of those members of the SCM who are not theological students are also members of the Free German Youth. Following the example of the Evangelical Church in Germany, the SCM has always insisted on the idea of religious unity between Eastern and Western Germany, and mutual visits by students from the two parts have been arranged within the limits of legal possibilities. In 1957, misunderstandings arose in this connection which contributed to the sentencing of one student pastor.

Students have, in recent years, participated more actively in public life, and Christian students helped to build a children's playground for the government-sponsored "National Reconstruction Program".

Changes

Since 1945 university life has undergone great changes, and therefore the conditions in which the SCM works have also changed. There are no longer only the six ancient universities, but in addition nearly fifty other universities, colleges, and other institutions of a university character. The number of students has increased correspondingly. As a consequence, the number of SCMs has risen to twenty-eight, most of which are under the care of student pastors who also do full-time work in their parishes. In contrast to that of Western Germany, the SCM in the East has decided to include work in schools in its activities. In the East students do not move freely from one university to another; they have to stay at the same place for the time of their studies, and for this reason life in the SCM is marked by greater continuity than in the West. But at the same time it must meet the students' desire to encounter new people, problems, and tasks, and to develop their abilities.

Although the life of students will always be similarly characterized by their age and studies, students at our universities, and therefore SCM members, have changed considerably due

to the social evolution of the last few years. Sixty per cent of all students come from workers' and rural families. Immediately after the last world war our universities were attended by a generation of students who were hungry in every respect, and marked by hard experiences, a generation which developed spontaneous and vigorous activity in the SCM. There was much discussion and experimentation and an intense social life. The present SCM members are younger, they need more spiritual inspiration and guidance, and develop more slowly. Due to their living together in government dormitories, they are less inclined to form a firm SCM community. Stiff examinations and a large number of courses put a heavy strain on the individual student. None of them has enough time. This is one reason why, of the eighty-five per cent of our students who are members of the Protestant Church, only a small number participate actively in SCM life, although they are all members in the formal sense. Besides, students want to avoid an ideological clash or close relationship with the church. In a state which wants to make one ideology supreme, it is easier for the individual to build up for himself an island of isolation through becoming efficient in his special field of knowledge and trying to avoid any loyalties.

Life in the SCM

It is through the student leaders' and student pastors' conferences, which take place at the beginning of each term, that the individual SCMs receive their inspiration and general guidance. Also, the travelling secretaries of the Berlin SCM office visit the SCMs each term. In addition, several SCMs will frequently come together for a regional meeting to get into contact with each other, something which is especially welcomed by small SCM groups.

In the Bible study, which is opened by the student leader, interpretation of the biblical text has first place. Questions are put after a general discussion, but this is difficult in large student groups with many members. Students want to receive a dogmatic, systematic, and apologetic clarification of their faith, rather than to acquire knowledge of the Bible. But dis-

cussions about the Bible have their traditional place in meetings of small groups. Everywhere Bible study is the crux of SCM work, and it has become much more important than the Sunday service. This can be explained by the lack of special rooms for student services, which obliges the students to attend their parish churches. Where theological departments are included in the government university, students attend the special services of these departments. There are daily meetings for intercession and thanksgiving at large universities. Holy Communion is celebrated everywhere in common by United, Reformed, and Lutheran students.

The preparation and carrying on of missionary projects has a special place in the life of the SCM. Villages and towns of the various church districts give a hearty welcome to the students who come to strengthen the faith of these parishes by bringing the Gospel through music, religious plays, hymns, and sermons. Both giver and receiver are thus encouraged.

The fact that most of the students are of the same age has a stimulating effect on SCM life. Each term new methods are tried and old ones abandoned. The SCM has for a long time been the field of experimentation for the church, where new initiatives in church life may be tried, while the parishes often remain conservative.

Human spirit and Holy Spirit

There is no doubt that the SCM of the German Democratic Republic is aware of its task of bringing the world of the human spirit into contact with that of the Holy Spirit. According to the constitution of the state, the church is entitled to make statements, giving its own point of view, on all issues of life. Speeches of wider interest, given not only by theologians but also by professors of other departments, are attended by many students who do not usually participate in SCM life. Students come together in small groups to discuss questions of faith resulting from the study of literature, medicine, science, and art. There are, of course, encounters between various aspects of the Gospel and dialectical materialism, for example, the creation of the universe, peace, salvation. But the discussion

with Marxists is sometimes interrupted. Recently they have put more stress on the fact that there is no "ideological co-existence" between their philosophy and the Christian faith. The fact that Jesus Christ claims the whole life of a Christian, and not merely his personal religious devotion, leads to many tensions. In spite of this a practical form of co-existence between Christians and Marxists must be searched for and found. During the last twelve years Christian students have certainly found it possible to maintain human contact with both worlds, but is the truth of the Gospel of Christ not sometimes hidden behind mental reservations? In this case, does not the salt of the Gospel become useless and lose its savour? Does not the attempt to become a communist for the communists (see 1. Cor. 9 : 19) for the sake of love result in a tactical move for one's own security? Or do we cause an unreasonable scandal by insisting in a loveless manner on the truth of Christ?

We are confronted by more questions than we can find solutions for. The daily vigilant celebration of the Life and Death of Christ in a separated part of a nation, in a People's Democracy which lies on the border of the so-called "Western world", demands a great deal of strength and does not yield visible results in our time. It is not social change, but Christ who has the power and will to change our present world. We can only put into practice this faith by examining old and new loyalties in the light of the truth and love of Christ.

THE STUDENT WORLD CHRONICLE

Science and the Canadian University Student

VINCE GORING

N. B. — The following estimate of the effect of science on the university students of Canada applies mainly to English-speaking non-Roman Catholic students. It would need to be qualified for Roman Catholics in general, and particularly so for French Canadians who number some thirty per cent of the population.

The background

To understand the effect of science on Canadian university students, one must recognize three factors in Canadian life which influence the student's approach to science. The first is the widespread interest in the Christian religion, and respect for the Bible. The use of the nouns "interest" and "respect" rather than "acceptance" and "knowledge" is deliberate. For though church-going is high, it is far from universal, and allegiance is often very superficial. And while most homes boast a Bible, it is often a dusty, unused treasure. This respect without knowledge or understanding leads to an unconsciously literalistic approach to the Scriptures. Though theological colleges are critical in their approach, clergy maintain from the pulpit "a conspiracy of silence", as one New Testament professor put it. The net result is an uncritical acceptance of the literal biblical account of creation on the part of the majority of high school students.

But Canada is also a country with a fairly high standard of living. Its people are comfortable and have known little of the ravages of war. It has an important voice in world affairs, but not a decisive one. It is a booming, growing country. This all contributes to a more relaxed atmosphere in general. Students do not get hot and bothered about things. Their background is mainly middle class and comfortable. And so they are concerned to enjoy the physical comforts of life.

Finally, if one asks what is responsible for this wealth and comfort, the answer is science. An underlying admiration for science and the scientist pervades the people's outlook. There is a confidence that science will give us more and more, tell us more and more, and allow us to exercise greater control over ourselves and nature. Science is our ally and the key to the utopia of tomorrow.

One cannot worship science and God, yet there is a tendency to worship both. Here then is the background of the conflict between science and religion. Let us see how it works itself out.

The Bible and evolution

Very quickly the conflict between the two undigested authorities, the Bible and science, comes to a head over the theory of evolution, for here is the point at which the fundamentalists join battle with the scientist. One can explain away the section in which the world is portrayed as flat, but the theory of evolution offends, and is obviously contrary to Genesis Chapter 1. So it is that the student, as he learns about this theory, more often than not is forced to rethink his evaluation of the Bible.

The most usual reaction is to accept the theory of evolution as true, and place the authority of the Bible much lower in estimation. One does not reject it: one simply recognizes that it is not as trustworthy as science. It was not right about how God made the earth and brought men into the world, and so cannot be given too serious consideration. Thus the student has even less inclination to read it and discover its true depths.

Others go further and decide that a book which is false in one area must be false in all areas. Some therefore reject evolution and embrace fundamentalism; others accept evolution and reject the Bible completely. Some seek to wring the theory of evolution out of the Bible, while a few solve the conflict by the great divorce, as exemplified by one graduate student who saw no need to attempt any reconciliation at any level, for "the Bible is the viewpoint of faith, and the other is that of science". "We believe the world was made in six days, and evolution!"

What is fascinating about all these attempts is their slavery to the scientific approach. If an account is to be valuable it must have all its facts straight. Both the religious fundamentalist and irreligious agnostic agree on this. There is no recognition of the dimension of myth, poetry, and art, where it is not necessary to get all the facts straight in order to convey truth. These approaches are strictly and narrowly within that of the scientific view. To complete the

record it must be added that some students do work their way through to a mature appreciation of the Bible, but their numbers are few.

The materialism of science

As we know, science deals with material things, and is highly successful in manipulating them in such a way as to give real power over the physical environment and real understanding of it. This control yields many bodily comforts. Both this concern with material things and the success in investigating them lead to an emphasis on, and attention to, the material. It is the world around that matters, the real world, and the comforts it yields. Thus it is not so much that God and faith are overthrown, but that they become unreal and irrelevant. The Canadian student does not reject belief in God; he does not consider the question important. He does not reject spiritual values; he finds them too unsubstantial to demand his attention.

Since we cannot see, hear, or touch God, how then can we be sure he exists? A graduate student in replying to this question said, "If we are ever able to prove the existence of God, it will be done by science". This is not an unusual attitude. Science raises the problem by emphasizing the material, and by implication casting doubt on the reality of the immaterial; but if the problem is to be solved science will solve it. Proof to many Canadian students is proof by the scientific method. They have little or no understanding of the inherent limitations of that technique.

Some real problems

Of course there are real problems raised by the scientific disciplines. One thinks of a girl, for example, who could not believe, because psychology had taught her to mistrust all inward experiences. Another student was so overwhelmed by the vastness of the universe that he found it impossible to believe that God cared in the least for us. If there were a God, he probably just started things off, and they now continue on their own merry way.

Miracles, to a generation under the influence of science, are a stumbling block. For science has impressed us with the regularity of nature. God, so it is believed, just does not interfere with nature. Unusual things do not happen. Thus the miraculous element in the Bible, which previous generations found a help, is now a stumbling block.

Conclusions

Of course the reader will have realized by now we are dealing with the results of an immature understanding of science. But this immature understanding, or as one might truly say, distorted understanding, is very prevalent in the Canadian university scene. It is the rule, not the exception. It is true that some students do achieve a mature understanding, and then we find some other fruits — the discipline of clear thinking, the habit of letting the facts influence the theory (whether the facts be gained from experience or biblical research), the honesty that good science brings — all of these can be found. The tragedy is that so many students do not achieve this maturity, but rest content with far less.

A GENERAL VIEW

OF THE LATIN AMERICAN SITUATION

MAURICIO LOPEZ

During the last year and a half I have spent much of my life *homo viator* viewing the world from the air as do the birds: the Argentine pampas, the tremendous winding rivers of Brazil, the gigantic Andean mountains, the volcanic lands of Central America, the Amazon jungles, the varied panorama of Mexico, the colourful Caribbean islands — all these have passed beneath me. And when I did come to earth, in most places it was for such brief periods that I did not have time to adapt myself to the changed environment. If my memory does not betray me, I have visited in about twenty countries, some of them several times; I have prepared, either in whole or in part, four leadership training courses; I have attended several retreats, a conference of the World Council of Churches on the Church and rapid social change, held in Montevideo; and I have accompanied T. V. Philip on some of his rich and varied South American experiences. From time to time, by chance, I managed to see my family in Mendoza, and during one week I was introduced, with the help of Herluf Jensen, into the intricacies of the New York mission board world.

When one comes into contact with the Latin American world, one appreciates the advantages of a common language which everyone south of the Rio Grande shares. The difference between Spanish and Portuguese — the other language spoken only in Brazil — is not sufficient to prevent communication. Unamuno used to say that the difference is so slight that it would be ridiculous for those who spoke one language to try to learn the other.

Rapid social change

The first thing which strikes the eye in Latin America is the rapid changes which are taking place in the society, sometimes at such a speed that it is almost impossible to comprehend their conse-

quences. One example of this is the extraordinary growth of the urban population in most of the countries. At the end of the last century São Paulo was a town of a few thousand inhabitants ; today its population is more than three million ; Caracas, an insignificant village thirty years ago, is now a city of over one million ; Mexico City, within a few decades, has become a great metropolis, and Lima is gradually losing its charming colonial atmosphere.

This rapid shift of population has produced a serious problem in the agricultural life of the continent, and a crisis in housing in the cities. This latter situation is reflected in the *villas miserias* which have grown up like fungus around all the great cities and are a source of disquiet to the old-time inhabitants. These masses of people are finding their way into every aspect of the community, and are moving towards a new way of life which will be free from the misery and injustice of the past and assure their social and economic welfare.

The skin colour of the American people ranges all the way from black to white. Latin America has been a real melting pot of races. Someone has spoken of Latin Americans as the cosmic race, because among them are to be found all possible combinations of humanity. Social stratification is dependent, not upon the colour of one's skin nor even upon the nobility of one's birth, but upon wealth and political ability. A successful financial venture, or a fortunate political manoeuvre, can elevate the poorest and most obscure citizen to the top of the social ladder.

In Latin America there is a great gulf between the rich and the poor. Extreme misery exists side by side with tremendous wealth : dire poverty lives next door to reckless extravagance. For example, on the hillside overlooking the beautiful city of Rio de Janeiro, are the *favelas*, probably among the most degraded and dangerous slums in the world. However, here and there a middle class is beginning to take form between these two extremes.

Political trends

The utter misery of the Indians of the rural areas and of the urban workers has challenged the governments of the Latin American countries to give greater attention to problems of economic health and social justice. Little by little a purely formal democracy, void of popular participation, and serving only to perpetuate political paternalism, economic imperialism, and social inequality, is losing its hold. The countries are embarking on nationalistic programs

which involve complete rejection of all forms of foreign colonial imperialism and an industrial development aimed at bettering the conditions of life of the working class.

I do not want to analyse this trend in detail, but only to say that in some countries the transition from a purely formal democracy based on political conceptions alien to the situation of our countries to a form of government in which the political and social institutions are more in accord with reality, has been speeded up by the presence of "strong men" — dictators — in whom the masses of the people have found the realization of their most cherished aspirations. Most of these dictators have no concrete program, and their well-intentioned efforts to improve the lot of their people have unfortunately been marked by the arbitrary use of power and by improvisation. Up until now in Latin America bread and liberty have been irreconcilable opposites, and political solutions, or pseudo-solutions, always tend to favour one at the expense of the other. How we can have the two together is still an open question. In Latin America we live in the hope that greater civic education of the masses and the coming to power of honest politicians who are technically trained may provide us with the answer. In this sense we look with profound sympathy on the Bolivian experiment in integrating the indigenous people into the life of the country and in raising the level of the economic, social, and spiritual life of the nation.

Intellectual life

The intellectual and literary life of Latin America mirrors the changes which are taking place in other spheres. Never since the time of Bolivar and Marti has the American problem been felt so keenly and deeply. The Peruvian Haya de la Torre in an address given in Mexico in 1928 was led to say : "Latin America unfortunately has not even a name... The failure of two European importations — the conquest and the republic — teaches us the great historical lesson that we must try to find ourselves." We have been pursuing this effort to discover our own human and geographic reality. I want to mention two people in the field of literature who have revealed our hidden face. One is Miguel Angel Asturias of Guatemala, who has associated the ancient Maya Quichua mythologies with the life of the tropics and with the agrarian problems of modern America. Workers on a banana plantation, whose lives are still coloured by the ancient religions of their people, are portrayed in conflict with

a powerful foreign company, and in this context burning questions about the nature of man, social structures, and economic imperialism are explored. The other is Pablo Neruda, the great Chilean poet, whose *Canto General* speaks of the American as the man of every horizon of yesterday and of today, incarnate in his tribulations and aspirations, successes and hopes.

Latin American philosophy

The major intellectual activity in Latin America has been applied principally to matters of a practical nature, very acute in nations which have been independent for such a short period, to historical studies, and literary creation. Alongside these main preoccupations, the philosophical vocation has gradually made its appearance, and it is only in our own day that it can be said to have developed to the point that it has become an independent sphere of culture.

The first great expansion of philosophical thought came through positivism. The social conditions of America have contributed to the growth of such a philosophy. Our countries felt the need to constitute an effective basis for living together and for organizing the exploitation of their natural resources. The application of a collective concern to social, political, and economic questions coincided with the spirit of the positivist movement.

The great historic contribution of positivism was to bring philosophical questions out of the monastery into the street, to remove from philosophy its esoteric character, and to make it instead a lay concern open to the preoccupations of the time. This is the polemical face of positivism which breaks down the barriers imposed by sectarian thought. This is its great merit, but also the point where we find its greatest limitations. Its contribution is polemical rather than philosophical; its strength is in action rather than in doctrine. Consider the fact that positivism served to produce a political revolution in Brazil and an educational revolution in Mexico, but without producing a first-rate philosopher in all of Latin America.

The surmounting of positivism has signified the liberation of philosophy from politics, education, and other activities of a practical nature. Philosophical questions have acquired a depth, refinement, and sharpness they never had before. Ideas are not now judged by their immediate practical application but their theoretical value. This has opened up the possibility of the development of a distinct philosophy. We are not apologizing in this way for a philosophy turned in on itself, which is purely academic and which fears to

contaminate itself with life. Human life and experience constitute a subject for reflection, but that reflection should not necessarily be carried away and overwhelmed by them.

The desire for a philosophy of its own denotes the influence of a widespread conception which was introduced through Ortega y Gasset and his philosophical perspectivism and is reflected in the expression: "I am myself plus my surroundings". It was a healthy influence in the sense that it has cured us of the desire simply to imitate blindly everything European. It served, too, to bring speculation into contact with reality, and to enable it to break out of purely academic discussions. But it was also a bad influence, because from the attempt to "philosophize" from a Latin American perspective, it is easy to go further and to "philosophize" as a Mexican, Peruvian, or Argentinian. And if philosophy is to give us an all-inclusive view of the world and of life, it can hardly contemplate that totality from a local perspective. It is certain that provincialism is the enemy of philosophy.

An ethical preoccupation seems to feed and give meaning to all Latin American philosophical thought, and it is evident that interest in man and his creation is its most common characteristic. May this first attribute of Latin American thought — perhaps the only one that deserves to be marked out as peculiar to it — be preserved in the future, that the ideal of the sage in whom conduct and doctrine are combined may find fertile fields in America for its development.

Cultural and intellectual contributions of Roman Catholicism

I now want to pass on to a brief description of the religious life of Latin America¹. The cross and the sword were allies in the necessities of the conquest. Religious activities were given an official status, and the same spirit ruled in the double undertaking of winning souls for heaven and lands for the Spanish crown. The combination of these ends produced an authoritarianism desirous of protecting the Indians, although in practice, in spite of noble voices raised in protest, the Indians continued to be oppressed. Looked upon as both pagan and ignorant, they were forced to suffer innumerable cruelties and incessant plundering.

These negative aspects, however, should not hide the cultural labours, the moderation and orientation of the customs and morals

¹ I am indebted for what follows to an article by Emilio Castro in an issue of the magazine *Cuadernos Teologicos*, entitled *Homenage a Karl Barth*.

of the people, which the Church effected from the moment the primitive conditions of the conquest were surmounted and colonization in the proper sense of the word was begun. The Church inculcated spiritual ideas which served as a break on instinct ; she postulated exemplary forms of conduct, whatever may have been the deviation of many of the priests, and she imposed disciplines of habit and moral responsibility. So that by the end of the sixteenth century the colonies had reached a level of life very superior to that which might have been expected in that physical environment and heterogeneous society.

No less important was the intellectual and educational work of Catholicism as seen in the opening of schools, in a teaching profession wholly dedicated to its task, in the impulse given to philosophical studies, in the stimulation of not a few literary undertakings and certain studies of the natural surroundings. It is no exaggeration to say that the Catholic Church was the initiator of cultural life in Latin America. However, no one doubts that this effort served to establish more firmly her own authority, and that her spiritual and intellectual activities did not help to form a climate of thought and a pattern of action propitious to the growth of liberty.

The Evangelical Church

It has been constantly affirmed in Europe that Latin America is an exclusively Catholic preserve. We will not analyse this claim, but it is sufficient to point to the existence of a vigorous Evangelical movement to show the fallacy of the idea of religious homogeneity in our countries. As has been pointed out, there are now third-generation Evangelicals of Iberian stock. The Latin American Protestant can now speak of "the religion of our fathers and grandfathers". There is at present a Latin America of the Reformed religion, not an imported product but an indigenous growth, which has five million members. The largest number is in Brazil, where they represent six per cent of the population, as they do in Cuba. In Chile, they are most numerous in proportion to the total population — eleven or perhaps twelve per cent.

The Evangelical Church faces a threefold problem, the consideration of which is bound to provoke a rethinking of the needs of the missionary vocation : relations with Catholicism, which is the official religion in the majority of the republics ; relations of Evangelical churches with each other, and the nature of the message to be proclaimed.

We have spoken of the presence of Roman Catholicism since the time of the conquest. This is expressed in the form of an authoritarian ecclesiasticism, an oppressive ritual, an emphasis on the veneration, which in practice amounts to the worship, of Mary, who in general has supplanted the person of Christ in the life of the faithful, and a tendency towards religious and cultural totalitarianism.

Relations between Evangelicals and Catholics

Since its beginnings on our continent the Evangelical Church has engaged in sharp polemics — not always with the dignity which might have been desired — against Roman Catholicism. In the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth the Catholic Church maintained a cultural and religious predominance reminiscent of that which obtained in Europe during the Middle Ages. It was inevitable that other voices would be heard in the religious world, as well as in the social and political, in direct conflict with the Church. For that reason Evangelical pulpits sometimes became instruments of controversy, always applauded by masons and liberals who saw in them a useful weapon against Catholic predominance. But it is doubtful whether these polemics, in which the Reformed Church spent so much energy, can be condoned from the point of view of a biblical concept of the Church. As a result of this anti-Catholicism, we Protestants have often been looked upon as people lacking in a truly patriotic spirit, and wanting to introduce foreign ideas and practices.

We believe that there are now appearing signs of a new climate, and that efforts are being made on both the Catholic and Evangelical side towards better mutual understanding. This incipient dialogue is encouraged by the rebirth of theology which has taken place in Ibero-America since the second world war. The works of Niebuhr, Barth, Brunner, Tillich, Cullman, and Bultmann, which have reached us through the ecumenical movement, have led to the discovery of new and wider horizons of thought, and the Student Christian Movement has been one of the channels through which this great theological renewal has been spread.

It is precisely at the point of this interest in theology that a dialogue could be staged, without discarding the possibility that the Christian Church may be realized also within the Roman Catholic Church, although the tremendous abyss which separates Rome from the truth revealed in the Scriptures cannot be ignored. "Our greatest

hope for the Christianization of the Latin American people cannot be placed in a mass conversion to Protestantism but in the conversion of the Roman Church to the Christian essence which is hidden in its bosom." And this can be obtained in large measure through the presence of a Christian theology that is alive, positive, and profound.

Division among Evangelicals

The second problem is related to the Latin American Evangelical community which is so visibly divided within itself. Eighty years ago there were no signs of an Evangelical movement on our continent. Today, as we have observed, there are five million Evangelicals. They have come from two sources: the immigration of European Protestants who brought their faith and churches with them to our countries, and the missionary movements from England and the United States. The former developed closed communities fed by a spirit which tended to the pure preservation of their religious inheritance; the latter dedicated themselves to indiscriminate preaching and the widening of the frontiers of the Evangelical Church.

Parallel to this twofold source of the Reformed Church, and as a result of the unfortunate importation of quarrels from the countries of origin, is the painful polemic between modernism and fundamentalism, which can be seen in most of our countries. Sin is the only word for that which, in the mission field, adds unnecessarily to the biblical scandal of the Cross a human scandal, which only sows confusion and disperses energies.

The message to be proclaimed

Finally, the message to be proclaimed. We live within a culture which believes it knows Christianity, and which, especially in the large cities, is indifferent to everything religious and Christian. On the other hand, we face the problem of fanaticism and the superstition of the Catholic masses who are merely nominal Christians. The Evangelical preacher believes a certain measure of apologetics is necessary; the temptation is to start on the periphery of the Christian message, trying to defend it, or to attack directly the false idols which Romanism has set up for the people to worship.

Such an attitude must be abandoned. All preaching starts from God and reaches out towards man, and not the other way around. The God we preach is Jesus Christ. Faced with fanaticism and superstition, we must remember that, although one task of Christian

preaching is to destroy false gods, this is a secondary task which springs from the primary one of preaching the true and living God.

The task of the SCM

We now come to the problem of defining the task of the SCM in this great area of the world. Several of our Movements have existed for two decades or more ; others are very young. The latter have grown up since the appointment of a WSCF secretary for Latin America in 1951, in the person of Valdo Galland. The SCM, like the Janus of Roman mythology, has two faces, one turned towards the Church and the other towards the academic world. In this first relationship the SCM is nurtured and finds the source of its life, and it has taken a great deal of effort to convince church leaders of the specific vocation of the Christian student and of the need to exercise this vocation in an ecumenical spirit. The tendency of our Evangelical churches to form close communities apart from the world has been a hindrance to student work. However, little by little the Evangelical churches are becoming more indigenous and are showing more interest in the life of the community of which they are a part, and in this new atmosphere the SCM has an opportunity to broaden the frontiers of the Church by reaching out into the various aspects of academic life. The "ghetto" attitude of the churches has also made difficulties for Christian students in their personal life and in their studies. Christian students from this background are defenceless in the confrontation with the ideologies which they meet every day in the university. The SCM is trying to help students to meet all these problems, and is indeed doing much. However, the Movements in Latin America, as in other parts of the world, are caught in the tension produced by the tendency, on the one hand, to draw themselves apart in small groups, which are concerned only with their own spiritual life, and, on the other, to become so much part of the life of the university that they neglect their spiritual life.

The Federation has made contact with all the Latin American countries and has established relations with student groups in the great majority of them. Among these groups are affiliated, associated, and corresponding Movements. As a result of the leadership training courses held in Mexico, at Santa Ana in El Salvador, at Lima, Peru, and at Cordoba, Argentina, existing SCMs have achieved greater stability and several new groups have come into being. Recently the Federation, through its Latin American secretary, participated in an excellent student retreat held at Atitlan Lake, Guatemala,

where about eighty students from all the Central American countries came together for Holy Week. We are very much encouraged by this meeting, and look with great hope towards the development of SCM work in this part of the continent.

I want to speak briefly now about the SCM in its relation with the Latin American university, Roman Catholicism, and the IVF.

The SCM and the university

The most obvious thing about the universities is their rapidly increasing number — in some countries this has reached the stage of inflation! Mexico has seventeen institutions of higher education; Bolivia about six; Argentina has just opened her eighth, and if we take into account the Catholic universities which are being organized, will soon have a dozen. All Ibero-American universities, with the exception of some in Cuba and Puerto Rico, are patterned after those in Salamanca, Spain, and Coimbra, Portugal, with a veneer of French positivism. The research and social functions of the university are, with a few exceptions, neglected, with the emphasis put on teaching, which, however, is not always very up-to-date. Until recently the most influential currents of thought were liberal humanism and scientific positivism. However, at the present time the winds of reform are blowing in an effort to make the university more relevant to contemporary life. In an article written in the 'twenties and entitled, "God is in sight", Ortega prophetically suggested that the influence of positivism would wane and a new concern for ultimate values would arise. The task of the SCM is to aid in the reform of the university, and also to take advantage of this growing interest in fundamental realities to witness to Jesus Christ.

The SCM and Roman Catholicism

The strategy of the SCM with regard to Roman Catholicism must be very cautious in order not to provoke misunderstanding and unnecessary scandal. The Catholicism which is predominant in Latin America is the child of Spanish Catholicism, refuses to relinquish its claim to a monopoly on truth, and supports this claim through a rigid hierarchy and political power. The question of Catholicism is complicated because, without forgetting the cultural, moral, and spiritual contributions which it has made to Latin American life, it must be recognized that these have been clouded by its toleration of religious syncretism, its obvious mariolatry, and the persecution, often with

much violence, of those who do not share its faith. There are today symptoms of change. Since the Peronist experiment, the Catholic Church has been less willing to give its support to "strong-arm" regimes which have in the past helped it to maintain its influence. It looks with favour on the new Christian Democratic Parties which are being organized in various countries, and which, while they are centre parties, tend to flirt with the leftists. This indicates that the Church does not want to be left out of the movement towards social justice. The Roman Church has also undertaken a tremendous program of education on every level. It is conscious that it has to a large extent lost the last generations and is determined to hold on to the present one. Finally, it is making an assessment of the religious situation in Latin America, and discovering that, after having slept for one hundred years, it no longer has a monopoly on the continent. Roman Catholics are beginning to regard the Evangelicals not as heretics but as *frères séparés*, to use the words of French Catholic writers.

We recognize that much mutual ill feeling still exists, and that what is said above does not apply to the Roman Church everywhere on our continent. At our leadership training course held recently in Cordoba, we insisted that in our contacts with Roman Catholic students our attitude should be characterized by brotherly love, and a desire to explore together the vast dimensions of our faith and to deepen our understanding of Jesus Christ as the Reconciler of all men.

The SCM and the IVF

As to the IVF, it first entered Latin America some years ago, and up until now has had work in only a few countries. However, it is at present trying to expand and to create new groups. We believe that its increased interest in Latin America is in some respects due to the work of the SCM there. The majority of its members come from the free and conservative churches, none of them from the Catholic Church or from among non-Christian students. None of these local groups claims any formal relation with the international organization, the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students. In general we can say that at the present time we have no difficulty with the IVF groups. At worst they try to ignore the SCM, and in some places, as in the Dominican Republic, cordial relations exist between the two groups.

Our attitude has been one of Christian witness, and of Christian charity. We have tried not to engage in useless controversy. We

firmly believe that the SCM has a specific mission to fulfil, and that this mission has been given to it by God. Where a group of Christian students is working in an ecumenical way, but without formal relations with either the SCM or IVF, as is the case in Cordoba, we have not interfered with their work, as this might result in division in the group. We greatly regret the split in work among Christian students, and believe that it is really a scandal that our small numbers in Latin America, living and working in a hostile environment, should be thus divided. We do not encourage this divisive policy, and we are doing our best to promote better relations between the two groups.

IMPRESSIONS OF A TOUR IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

VALDO GALLAND

I left Geneva on December 3, 1957, and was back on February 12, 1958, after visiting Ceylon, South India, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Singapore, Burma, North India, and Pakistan. During these ten weeks of travel I beat my own record for mobility, taking flight on an average every two days, which makes it clear that I didn't stay anywhere very long. My impressions are therefore probably superficial and incomplete. I am nevertheless very grateful to have been able to meet many student Christian leaders in their own surroundings. I shall be able to think of them and pray for them much more realistically. I hope that one consequence will be more effective work in the offices in Geneva on behalf of the Asian Movements, and their more active participation in the life and thought of the Federation.

Asian diversity

It is impossible for me to travel in other continents without constantly comparing them with Latin America. One difference leaps to the eyes at once. The twenty Latin American republics constitute a whole wherein their diversity is only a variation of a fundamental unity. Asia, on the other hand, is characterized by an extreme diversity. Whereas Iberian colonialism is the basis of Latin American unity, in Asia Western colonialism has further complicated an already existing indigenous diversity. The differences between the Philippines, Indonesia, and Burma, for example, are due not only to autochthonic cultural and ethnical facts, but to the influence of the Spanish and then of the Americans in the Philippines, of the Dutch in Indonesia, and of the British in Burma. This great diversity is evident in the matter of language. Whereas in all Latin America there are for practical purposes only two languages, so closely related that there is in practice no language barrier, each Asian country possesses several regional languages, a national language, and in every case a European language as well. In India, despite the government's efforts to get Hindi accepted as a national language, educated Indians prefer to use English when they do not speak the same regional language. In Burma, although there is a national

language, English is used in the university, and the theological seminary near Rangoon is in fact a group of three seminaries which give their lectures in different languages. In the Philippines there are many who speak the language of their own island, Tagalog (the national language), English, and Spanish.

Anti-colonialism

The common link between the nations of Asia — for there is one — is to be found in the political situation. Indirectly the various colonial systems have forged an Asian unity. They are all now young nations in the sense that they have only enjoyed political independence for a very short time. In each one we find the phenomenon which we call nowadays "rapid social change", for these free peoples all want now to live the life which the governing powers used to live. Very naturally, at the same time, these countries are anti-colonial in their reactions. This is true even for the Philippines, whose occupation by the Americans is not to be compared with European colonization in other Asian countries. Those who are surprised at the warm feeling of the Filipinos for the Americans fail to understand two things: first, that this feeling is deserved because the Americans have done much for the Philippines (state education for all, liberation from the Japanese, political independence); and second, that this feeling is neither blind nor unbounded; it would diminish or even dry up should the Filipinos discover that they were being exploited in other ways. National feeling runs high in all these countries. It is almost inevitable that anti-imperialism should not always be very positive. This is probably true of the dispute between Indonesia and Holland on the subject of West Irian. Even admitting, as did a Dutchman I met at Bandung, that Holland is the more guilty party, we may wonder whether the Indonesian government has not increased the internal political difficulties which are now degenerating into civil war. Of course, the government is not driving the Dutch out of the country, and those who maintain that it is are consciously or unconsciously deceiving themselves. But the passing of a law forbidding Indonesians to study in a foreign institution (here again it is inaccurate to say that the government has closed the Dutch schools) has forced these schools to close for lack of pupils. The impossibility of giving their children the education they would wish is a reason for the departure of the Dutch, who wrongly or rightly fear that Indonesian nationalism may have yet more serious consequences. As a result the country is losing the technicians who are needed in

every field, especially that of communications, which are of strategic importance in a nation formed of innumerable islands. An independent country has a right to have all the important posts in the hands of its own nationals, but surely it would be better if the transition occurred more gradually.

Political instability

A second aspect of the common characteristics of the Asian countries is what seems to me to be the fragility of their present political situation. This is disquieting when one knows what vicissitudes the Latin American countries have lived through for over a century because of their political instability. In Pakistan none spoke favourably of the present government ; on the contrary, they told me of incompetence, corruption, nepotism, and so forth. It would seem that the government in no way represents popular opinion. It is questionable whether American aid, which is considerable, is not helping the government more than the people. In India, as we know, the state of Kerala has a communist government ; they say that Bengal will be the one to follow suit. In spite of obvious achievements (I was constantly asking myself whether there really was less poverty or whether I was simply not seeing it because I had already seen it five years ago, but I was bound to conclude that India has undoubtedly made considerable progress), one has the impression that Congress and Nehru himself are no longer in such a strong position. In Ceylon, difficulties due to rivalry between the Tamil and the Cingalese groups are no longer in the foreground. The preoccupations now are the strikes and the claims of various sections of the population who are beginning to be aware of their power. In Burma, and apparently in Malaya too, the government is far from controlling the whole country. More or less vast areas are in the control of the rebels ; we do not know exactly whether we have to do here with banditry or with something of a political nature. I have been assured that one may not travel away from Mandalay without risk of being attacked ; in this very town I stayed with someone who was travelling in a bus when it was robbed by "dacoits" who on that occasion killed one of the passengers. As for Indonesia, while I write these lines everyone can read in the papers the often conflicting accounts of the war which has broken out in Sumatra and in Celebes. The rebels, it is said, want to make Indonesia an officially Islamic country, and to banish communism ; they criticize the present government's principle of cooperating with all tendencies.

The outcome of the present situation is all the more uncertain because the positions involved may excite the interest of foreign powers. It is to be hoped that the Indonesians will settle their differences among themselves as quickly as possible and without destroying the unity of their nation.

To conclude these thoughts on the political situation in Asia, I should like to mention another striking point. For the moment it is of an ethnical nature, but it could end by having political consequences. We find it in some degree everywhere, in the Philippines, in Indonesia, in Malaya, in Burma, and in certain parts of northern India, especially in Calcutta and its neighbourhood. I mean the strong Chinese element in the population. Everywhere one meets the Chinese they are the leaders in commerce; they are intelligent and hardworking; they are prosperous. That may have political consequences. If the new state of Malaya does not demand the colony of Singapore from the British, it is largely because of the high proportion of Chinese there; the government of Malaya does not want an increase in the number of Chinese in the country. This number is so great in most of the countries of Asia that a missionary who formerly worked in China told me that, apart from the communist question, in Asia the future belongs to the Chinese.

Religious diversity

The diversity of the countries of Asia is found again in the religious field. Pakistan is officially an Islamic country, and Indonesia is predominantly Moslem. Buddhism dominates in Ceylon and Burma. In India there are several religions, of which Hinduism is the most important. In the Philippines, an interesting fact for a Latin American, it is Roman Catholicism of Spanish origin that one finds. The resemblance to the Roman Catholicism of Latin America is obvious. It has the same political and intransigent character; even the numerous North American priests give the impression of having left the broadmindedness which normally characterizes them at home or on the boat which brought them. Yet there are differences between the Philippine and the Latin American situations. In the former the proportion of non-Roman Christians is certainly higher. It reaches perhaps twenty per cent, whereas in Chile, the Latin American country with the highest proportion of Protestants, it is well below this figure. This difference is explained by the existence of the Independent Philippine Church on the one hand, and on the other the indigenous sects like that created by a certain Manalo,

which have some importance even if they can with difficulty be considered Christian. The Independent Philippine Church, which grew out of the Roman Church in the days of the Spaniards, is more interesting. The origin was more political than religious in character, and hence it has known many vicissitudes. Today, helped in a friendly way by the Episcopal Church, it is finding a solid foundation again which will enable it to strengthen itself theologically and ecclesiastically.

Another difference between the Philippines and Latin America is the previously mentioned popular friendliness towards the Americans. In Latin America it is easy to attack Protestantism with the allegation that it is a Yankee import; in the Philippines, on the other hand, some would be tempted to accept Protestantism just because it is the Christian confession of the majority in the United States. Finally, the third difference: the Roman Catholicism of the Philippines seems to me to be in the same state in which Latin America knew it at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the former discontented intellectuals still considered themselves to be members of the Church, whereas today in Latin America the anti-clerical intellectuals attack the Church from outside. It is difficult to say whether Roman Catholicism in the Philippines will go the same way as it has in Latin America, for the sociological influences which press on it at the moment are very different from those which affected Latin America fifty years ago. It may well be that the evolution will be different, for the Philippines are part of Asia and so the whole context is different.

"Other religions"

If I have dealt at length with the religious situation of the Philippines, it is because it interested me specially. I must confess, however, that I was struck even more by the "other religions". In Ceylon the constant spectacle of the yellow robes of the Buddhist priests fascinated me. Later in Pakistan the minarets of the mosques and the veiled women constantly confronted me with the Moslem question. Suddenly the "other religions" were no longer part of the syllabus of a Western theological seminary; they were a burning question, a daily reality, an existential fact. The renaissance of the ancient religions of Asia is much more real than can be imagined without having this personal experience of it. It is only now that the Christian faith begins to meet the other religions, for it is only recently that it is unsupported by colonial powers. This meeting

will not take place on the purely religious plane, which does not mean that Christians should not try to understand other faiths (in Asia there are certainly not enough specialists in this field at the moment). But just as in Europe and America there is still at present, in spite of dechristianization, a fusion or confusion of the Christian faith with Western culture, so in the same way in Asia to be Buddhist or Hindu or Moslem is not a purely religious fact, but at the same time a social and cultural reality. It is this that makes the attitude of Christians towards believers of other religions so complex: when are they dealing with another faith and when with an essentially cultural phenomenon? Without denying the reality of the danger, we must recognize that in the West we are a little too ready to accuse our Asian brethren of syncretism. We should take much more seriously the requests from Asia that the Federation organize a study conference to work on this question. It is not enough that it has been and will be on the program of all Federation conferences in Asia; it should for once at least be not just an element in the program but the whole of it; it would be good if for once religion should not be studied from the starting-point of political and university questions, but that the latter should be looked at from the point of view of the "other religions".

The mission of the Church in Asia

The problem we have just raised is part of a much vaster one: that of the mission of the Church. If there had still been any doubt in my mind of the divine inspiration of the Federation's project, "Life and Mission of the Church", it would have been completely effaced by this tour in Asia. There, as elsewhere, not to say more than elsewhere, a total review of the subject must be undertaken. It is not only of course concerned with the problems raised for foreign missions; this is only one element in the whole problem of the mission of the Church which is so acute today. Why is it so acute? Surely because of all the radical changes — political, economic, technical, sociological, religious, and even ecclesiastical, ecumenical, and theological — which have taken place in recent years. But as I travelled through these countries of Asia I asked myself a disturbing question which suggests an even more fundamental reason. I asked myself whether missionary work did not contain something false from its very beginning, because it was exercised through Western political domination. Has not all Christian work in Asia consequently been under a divine curse, of which the present crisis is a symptom?

In the anguish caused by this question I began to reread the book of the Acts, and one fact seemed certain to me : there is no missionary action perfectly free of sociological and political factors. St. Paul made use of one of them : the Diaspora. No doubt the dispersion of the Jews in the Roman Empire is not to be compared politically with Western rule in Asia, but it is no less a purely human factor which Paul made use of to preach the Gospel ; without the Diaspora Paul would not have reached the pagans so easily. It must be noted too that in every use of human elements there is a danger, a risk, and that it is not even given to Christians to prevent the regrettable consequences. The missionary work of Paul where it aroused opposition fomented Judaic Christianity. But the motive of his action being pure, his work bore fruit. It must be noticed in what way Paul's motive was pure : he did not use the Diaspora to reach the pagans, but he reached the pagans because he wanted to preach the Gospel to the Jews ; he was in fact convinced that the Gospel was for the Jews in the first place. These data may be used to evaluate the modern missionary movement. Its motive was pure inasmuch as it proposed to evangelize the heathen, not because the so-called Christian nations no longer needed it, but on the contrary because they had urgent need of it. Now the modern missionary current flowed out of the movements of revival, and these were characterized precisely by a new preaching of the Gospel to Christians themselves. I cannot help myself believing in the purity of the motives of nineteenth century missionary work in Asia. Moreover, present-day problems should not prevent us seeing the extraordinary fruits of this enterprise. Nevertheless, since use was made of political human factors, there have been unavoidable dangers. Judaic Christianity has also entered into modern missionary work : belief in Western superiority, identification of Western forms of life and thought with the Gospel. For this reason, if we are to understand and resolve present-day problems, we must seek their origins not only in the revolutionary transformations of these last years but also in causes which existed before these transformations.

One of the problems which the Asian churches have to resolve today is the use to be made of the numerous institutions inherited from the missions : dispensaries, hospitals, schools, colleges, etc. The embarrassment is obvious : these institutions were created in very different circumstances from those of today, whereas their purpose and often their methods remain fundamentally unchanged. In face of this problem the new generation is in danger of offering negative criticisms all the time. Now if we have been led to recognize

the purity of the missionary motive, we must admit that there was something positive in the origin of these institutions. Therefore, before we say what is false in the present position of the Christian colleges, for example, we must try to see what there was that was right at the moment of their foundation. We certainly do not want to boast nor, still less, to justify the maintenance of the present situation, but to discover how divine grace was manifested through those who preceded us in God's work ; for all that is pure and just in the action of Christians is the work of grace. We need to discover the miracle of divine compassion working in the previous generation, if we are to believe in the possibility of this miracle in our own generation, if we are to be the instruments of the grace which renews the Church and its work.

Problems of Asian SCMs

In the political, social, religious, and ecclesiastical context which I have just outlined, our Student Christian Movements exist and strive to accomplish their task. All I have said goes to show that their problems are many. We must remember this when we say that what they have to do is more impressive than what they are doing. The Pakistan Movement should not fear frank encounter with Islam. The Ceylon Movement should include the study of Buddhism in its program. The Indian SCM should put its finances in order, reorganize itself so as to give more importance to local groups, and set up study programs which are more in tune with the real situation of Indian students. The Burmese Movement should take study more seriously. The Indonesian Movement should look less for ready-made solutions and make a greater theological effort. In the Philippines, where the national Movement is not yet constituted, they should try to resolve the conflict between SCMs and Christian Youth Fellowships, not so much by discussions about organization but much more by properly student work. It is not a bad thing to know that our national Movements are weak and imperfect. We should be less tempted to glory in the Federation. For however great its achievements in the international field, the Federation is only strong in the measure in which the national Movements accomplish their task.

Causes for gratitude and confidence

But we must also describe the positive and encouraging aspects of our Movements. The SCM of Pakistan, which until recently was described as scarcely in existence, has now with its eight branches

and its National Committee achieved a gratifying solidity ; it now looks forward to appointing its first full-time General Secretary. The Movement of Ceylon takes its study program seriously, is throwing itself into work in secondary schools, and counts on the help of a large number of former members. The Indian SCM, with its awareness of the real problems of today, is certainly an instrument of renewal in the churches of India ; the recent Guntur conference (the Triennial of the SCM of Pakistan, Indian, and Ceylon), organized especially by the Indian Movement, whose results were very exhilarating, is an indication of the great possibilities of this Movement. In Burma the SCM is certainly privileged in its good relations with the churches, and it will soon have a full-time General Secretary for the first time. The GMKI of Indonesia is the most student of the Asian Movements because all the members of the National Committee are students ; further, it is characterized by a clear awareness of its responsibility in the university and political fields. In the Philippines all who are responsible for the creation of the national Movement are working with tact and a very sane attitude towards the question of relationships with the Roman Catholics. We have therefore many causes for gratitude and for confidence that the work accomplished will bear much fruit.

Plans for a "pilot" conference

To conclude, I should like to mention one of my most interesting experiences during this tour : the Planning Committee of the Asian Conference which will inaugurate the project "Life and Mission of the Church". This Committee, meeting in Tambaram in mid-December, did some excellent work. I have no doubt that this "pilot" conference, which will meet at Rangoon from December 28 to January 7, will bring quite providential help to the Asian Movements, in addition to its useful contribution to the rest of the project. My personal hope is that the Rangoon conference will not only serve to discover new paths of Christian obedience in Asia, but will show clearly that the mission of the Church, evangelism, is not essentially a duty but a privilege ; that it is not something that we ought to do, but something that we do almost in spite of ourselves ; and that the duty of seeking new ways of obedience is accomplished in the joy of knowing that all is grace.

BOOK REVIEWS

Some Bibliographical Notes on Living Ideologies

Judging by the current literature in this field, this is a time not of great ideological certainty and conviction but of confusion and frustration. In the West writers are fumbling with the problem of how to make sense of ideologies which have lost their power because they have lost their relevance. In Asia, Africa, and Latin America, nationalism seems to be the most compelling idea, but it often lacks the social and economic strength to give it real substance and power. A sample of these recent books indicates the trends in the present situation.

Perhaps the most recent important book is Milovan Djilas' *The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System* (Thames and Hudson, 1957). It reveals the fundamental rethinking which is taking place within the communist countries. And it has the enormous advantage over other books on communist thought in that it is by one of the leaders of communism, writing from within his country.

Perhaps Djilas' book will not make a great impact upon those who have never experienced the ideological or political fascination of communism. It is essentially a complicated and somewhat theoretical grappling with Marxist ideology, and seeks to refute the teaching of Marxist-Leninism using primarily the categories of Marxist-Leninism. Briefly stated, the thesis of Mr. Djilas is that communism has been most successful in economically and socially backward areas where its revolutionary and totalitarian methods have helped to free these countries from foreign control and to produce rapid industrialization. But once this "heroic era of communism is past", and after the feat of industrialization is accomplished, it is not the classless society that evolves but "a new class of owners and exploiters is in existence". Under the dogma of communism this New Class becomes absolute in its power, more so than any other class in history. "Absolute despotism equates itself with the

belief in absolute human happiness, though it is an all-inclusive and universal tyranny."

Opinions from Poland and other Eastern European countries verify Djilas' description of the crisis in which many followers of communism find themselves. Though it was written before the revolt in Hungary, it provides an accurate description of the ferment of ideas which helped to produce that revolution. This book does not offer easy comfort to those in the West who hope to find in it evidence for the success of the "free world" ideology. His opinion that communist-style totalitarian revolution is an "inescapable necessity" in a backward country in need of industrialization, whatever its scientific validity, would probably be very widely assented to by many people in Asia and Africa today.

Confirmation of the new direction of communist thinking is to be found in the book entitled *Imry Nagy on Communism : In Defence of the New Course* (Thames and Hudson, 1957). This is a collection of essays published for the former Hungarian communist leader after the suppression by the Soviet forces of his government in Hungary and his subsequent imprisonment. Actually they were written by Nagy to defend the more liberal policies which he instituted in Hungary during the period he was Hungarian prime minister from July 1953 to April 1955. Like Djilas he defends his position by an appeal to the principles of Marxist-Leninism. He is bitter in his attack on Soviet domination, expressed in Stalinist political and ideological dictatorship and the subjection to dogmas which actually prevented other countries from moving closer to the socialist group, and also prevented the socialist group from approaching other countries. Prophetically he declares that "...the country and the cause of socialism are being brought to the brink of a catastrophe if radical political and personal changes are not carried out quickly. Nothing will aid in international imperialism more than the policies of the present leadership, which drive the people into the arms of reaction."

He sharply attacks the trends in communist thinking which have reduced it to rigid and narrow formulas and have destroyed its moral and ethical foundations. Referring to the prevailing attitudes in the government and party of the communist countries he writes :

Under their leadership, the building of socialism was reduced to the socialization of the instruments of production, the establishment of the economic basis of socialism, the transformation of the economy and the class relationships depending thereon, and the acquisition and

consolidation of political power. They completely forgot about living society, about man with his manifold, complicated individual and social relations, at the crux of which are ethical and moral problems, or rather, the rules and principles that have been or are to be evolved (page 44).

Some objective reviewers have deplored the publication in English of the books by Djilas and Nagy on the grounds that their chief effect is to increase the intellectual complacency and political conservatism especially in Western Europe and the United States. On the other hand, it may be that many non-communist readers will be excited by this new evidence of the resurgence of the human spirit, and find in it an illumination for their own ideological and social groping.

Has the Church anything new to say about Christianity and communism today? The only book with a new approach to this question is a volume entitled *Communism and the Theologians: Study of an Encounter* (SCM Press, 1958) by Charles West.

In the words of the author, the purpose of the book is "to study the living response of Christians to the living force of communism in the present-day world, as this is illuminated by the theologies which have had most to do with this response". No major Christian writer whose views on communism have any relevance has been omitted from this study: but the analysis concentrates on Brunner (Communism as the Enemy), Hromadka (Communism as Judgement and Hope), Tillich (Religious Socialism), Reinhold Niebuhr (An American Encounter), while the longest section in the book is reserved to Barth, because of the great influence of his theology on the form of the Christian encounter with communism in Europe.

No other book provides such a comprehensive and careful study and critique of the differing encounters of Christian thought with communism. This is a tremendous achievement of interpretation, one of the definitive studies on Christian confrontation with an ideology. Unfortunately, so far as the current discussion is concerned, it was written before events in Hungary and Poland, when the conversation with communism was still real. Today the situation is different. Most of the theologians who saw some hope in communism have been silenced by these events, and those who have emphasized its illusions no longer take the trouble to argue.

That there is a continuity between human experience in the communist and non-communist areas of the world is, I think, demonstrated if one turns to the book by C. A. R. Crosland, *The Future of Socialism* (Jonathan Cape, 1956), a very penetrating and stimulating

analysis of the substance and the purpose of socialist thought in Britain today. Compared with the highly theoretical and generalized approach of Djilas and Nagy, Crosland provides a wealth of social information and shrewd economic analysis to back up his argument. Mr. Crosland, reputedly the *éminence grise* of Mr. Gaitskell and one of the keen young minds in socialist circles in Britain, is no less candid than the authors of the other books. He surveys very frankly the present British social and economic scene and against this measures the relevance of traditional socialist goals.

He finds that what is fundamental in socialist thought is in the nature of "moral values and aspirations". "There is no point", he writes, "in searching the encyclopedias for a definitive meaning (of socialism) ; it has none, and never could." Today "the pace of change has overtaken the doctrine and a reformulation is needed". The body of Crosland's book is taken up with this task of reformulation. Those whose socialism is still based on fighting the "detestable capitalist race" will get little comfort from his analysis. "... Today traditional capitalism has been reformed and modified almost out of existence and it is with a quite different form of society that socialists must now concern themselves."

He finds that three basic socialist aspirations still maintain in "what is admitted to be a prosperous and generally tolerable society" : increasing social welfare, establishing a greater measure of social equality, and eliminating class distinctions. But the situation permits no rapid improvements. As he defines a socialist program today, it is concerned with the fine distinctions of weighing a little increase in taxes against a little more social welfare.

In one of the most interesting passages of the book, Mr. Crosland argues that there must be a fundamental change in the mood and spirit of British socialism. He wants less restriction on personal freedom, less puritanism in British society. He argues, "We need not only higher exports and old age pensions, but more open-air cafés, brighter and gayer streets at night, later closing hours for public houses, more local repertory theatres, better and more hospitable hoteliers and restaurateurs, brighter and cleaner eating houses, more riverside cafés, more pleasure gardens, . . . more murals and pictures in public places, better designs for furniture and pottery and women's clothes, statues in the centre of new housing-estates, better designed street lamps and telephone kiosks, and so on *ad infinitum*." In Crosland's view too much of the socialist tradition, especially as represented in the non-conformist and the Fabian influences, was bleak and forbidding in its attitude towards human happiness and

welfare. Commenting on the influence of Sydney and Beatrice Webb he says, "Many of their public virtues, so indispensable at the time, may not be as appropriate today". "Now the time has come for a reaction, for a greater emphasis on private life, on freedom and dissent, on culture, beauty, leisure, and even frivolity. Total abstinence and a good filing system are not now the right sign-posts to the socialist Utopia : or at least, if they are, some of us will fall by the way-side." All this is a far cry from the heroic socialist proclamations of justice and equality of the past, so far in fact that one might justifiably ask if it is really socialism at all. In any case, it clearly denotes the end of an era in socialist thought.

Unfortunately, though the author recognizes that "the most obvious fulfilment of socialist ideals lies in altering not the structure of our own country but in the balance of wealth and privilege between advanced and backward countries", in this book he is concerned with the British domestic scene, and does not develop what may be the most important challenge confronting British socialism today.

This search for first principles and for reformulations of traditional Western ideologies is even more pronounced in conservative circles (in the West). Most of this "new conservatism" in political thinking tends to be a negative reaction to certain excesses of "liberal" thinking. While there is a serious attempt to grapple with the illusions of political liberalism as it developed in England and especially in the United States during the period of the New Deal, this easily turns into fanatically aggressive witch-hunting. One of these books is Prof. Eric Voegelin's *The New Science of Politics*, published in 1952 (University of Chicago Press), which is a strong attack on the positivistic and gnostic basis of contemporary political thinking.

Prof. Voegelin very persuasively challenges the scientific, positivistic approach to politics which in his view destroyed political thinking based on truth and tradition. Arguing from an Aristotelian-Thomist position he is bitter towards those who have betrayed the truth, and this includes Protestants. They have been the accompaniment if not the cause of the modern forms of political gnosticism. This identification leads to some strong words. He writes savagely of Calvin : "The work of Calvin, thus, may be called the first deliberately created gnostic *koran*. A man who can write such a koran, a man who can break with the intellectual tradition of mankind because he lives in the faith that a new truth and a new world begin with him, must be in a peculiar pneumopathological state." As is well known in these circles, all this ended in totalitarianism. One can agree with much of Voegelin's critique, but his description of Calvin could almost

stand as a description of his own fanatical confidence in his own views. But Voegelin must not be judged entirely by such wild and unsupported charges. He is more interesting when he writes :

The material civilization of the West, to be sure, is still advancing ; but on this rising plane of civilization the progressive symbolism of contributions, commemoration, and oblivion draws the contours of those 'holes of oblivion' into which the divine redeemers of the Gnostic empires drop their victims with a bullet in the neck.

What is the relevance of all this search for basic principles to the ideas on political and social goals now appearing in Asia and Africa ? In these regions there is an uncomplicated demand for freedom and national development which in terms of the world future will certainly be as decisive for the lives of people as anything being said or done in the West. The countries of Africa, for example, have yet to produce a consistent set of political principles. At the moment all we have are the bits and pieces, the pragmatic ideas of the group of new national political leaders who have seen a few things rather clearly, almost too clearly.

I have never regarded the struggle for the Independence of the Gold Coast (writes Nkrumah, the leader of the Independence Movement in Ghana) as an isolated objective, but always as a part of a general world historical pattern. The African in every territory of this vast continent has been awakened and the struggle for freedom will go on. It is our duty as the vanguard force to offer what assistance we can to those now engaged in the battles that we ourselves have fought and won. Our task is not done and our own safety is not assured until the last vestiges of colonialism have been swept from Africa. (From *Ghana, The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah*.)

The contrast between these words of Nkrumah and the realities underlying them, and the struggle of the "West" to reformulate its goals in economic and political life, perhaps expresses the real ideological struggle for the future.

PAUL ABRECHT.

In Debt to Dr. Kraemer

This article began with a request to review Dr. Kraemer's two recent books, his massive *Religion and the Christian Faith* and the much slighter but equally stimulating *The Communication of the Christian Faith*. A second reading of both books soon made it clear that for anyone like myself to attempt to pass judgement on such massive learning was sheer impudence. So the article has taken the form of trying to express some of the thoughts aroused by reading these two books and the earlier volume, *The Christian Message in a non-Christian World*, prepared for the Tambaram Conference of 1938. What could a missionary student committed to getting in touch with people of other faiths, with a view to showing the relevance of Jesus Christ, learn from this master theologian of the subject?

The first point is the centrality and primacy of God's revelation of himself and of his initiative in seeking men. The starting-point is not intuition nor divination, nor a product of the religious consciousness, but God's self-disclosure in Jesus Christ. Allegiance to Jesus Christ is an *a priori* to the Christian (and every other religion has a similar *a priori* of some sort, an initial act of faith). Faith is the right starting-point, the response to what God has done, and in this response the will must hold primacy over the intellect. Dr. Kraemer judges that St. Thomas Aquinas was unbiblical in his over-emphasis on the intellect, though he quotes with approval the tribute of the great doctor: "I have learned more at the foot of the crucifix than from books."

Secondly, there is Dr. Kraemer's insistence on truth as the primary requisite in encounter. In all our thinking and contacts we must be above fairness and unfairness; as Christians we must see and judge all in the face of Jesus Christ, the most merciful and severe judge. He reaffirms the thesis of his earliest book "that the right theological criterion is not a universal Idea of Religion at its highest, but God's self-disclosure in his revelation in Jesus Christ", and criticizes the Jerusalem Conference of 1928, not for gladly recognizing values in other religions, but for thinking that there was such a universal idea.

To Dr. Kraemer, Christ stands as judge over all religions, including the empirical, contemporary expression of Christianity. He quotes

with approval the severe judgement of the Dutch theologian, J. H. Gunning, that "orthodox theology passed its value-judgements on the religions without knowing them. There is a divine judgement in the fact that it had to give back to secular science what it too easily, prematurely, by anticipation without knowledge, appropriated to itself", that is, the right of interpreting other religions.

He agrees that much atheism has been a noble protest against degrading religion, and claims that Marx attained such a following because official Christianity failed to be the advocate of downtrodden man, and that communism succeeds because religion is so often found in support of an intolerable *status quo*.

The thought of Christ as judge over contemporary Christianity arouses interesting thoughts about the rejection of Christianity by other religions. Is it Christ they reject or is it our interpretation of him? Are we Christians guilty of offering them the idol of Christ which we have made for ourselves and which they do not regard as authentic? Is it Christ, or is it our Western, organized, activist, divided Christianity which they reject?

Dr. Kraemer still defends his former thesis of discontinuity, though he now makes clear his dialectical treatment of it. He admits that he was too dogmatic and summary in his earlier treatment, and that he ought to have explained such seemingly contradictory statements as "the religions are efforts of man to apprehend the totality of existence", and "God undeniably works and has worked outside the sphere of biblical revelation". "We have far too one-sidedly characterized the religions as human performances and achievements, good or bad, and dealt with them too unilaterally as purely human products. Only in short parentheses have we expressed the opinion that God is somehow active in these religions too."

The question of what God is doing in the other religions is the really thrilling one. Recently I attended a conference in Germany of the World Congress of Faiths in which the subject was the ground of unity among religions. Speakers from other faiths spoke of the ground of unity as they saw it from the standpoint of their own religions. In discussion I found myself expressing the view that the only ground of unity that I, as a Christian, could find acceptable was the activity and revelation of God, whom I believed to have revealed himself uniquely and supremely in Jesus Christ, and who is also at work in all religions.

Yet must there not inevitably come a crisis of discontinuity and commitment, when the man or group from another religion recognizes that Christ is relevant to the goal which his own religion has

set before him, and makes his leap of faith. "Except a man be born again he cannot *see* or enter the Kingdom of God." There will surely come a time when he enters the new creation, grateful to the religion that set him on the way, yet seeing that the unsearchable riches of God in Christ immeasurably surpass all the treasures of the past.

To discover what God is doing in the other religions requires a new adventure in encounter and communication; here Dr. Kraemer's shorter book comes to our aid. However can the convinced believer of another faith be helped to Christ? Dr. Kraemer says that in biblical communication the Holy Spirit is an invisible third partner, indeed the chief one of the three. The real communication of the Gospel is to transmit a third, who is a person not a symbol, who is already present and active. Here again we are brought back to the primacy of God's initiative and revelation. In unredeemed humanity all is Babel; in the new creation signified by Pentecost full communication is restored; where the full power of the Holy Spirit reigns, the divine-human dialogue is restored, and man-to-man dialogue is rescued from disorder. That demands a further commitment of faith and trust.

Given that commitment some of us must go over the frontier into the realm of the other religions. Our first activity there, says Dr. Kraemer, must be the art of listening. We have so to enter into the experience of other men, that we begin to think as they do, feel as they do, and then at last be able to speak in conceptions which they will understand of what God has done for us. There will be no self-assertion in this witness, but a great humility, a deep gratitude to God, and a love for the men of other religions which is akin to God's love for us. Dr. Kraemer is such a giant for truth and such an enemy to shallow thinking and sentimentality that one almost misses the shy notes of Christian affection, as when, for example, he wonders if Karl Barth forgets that God who is so totally sovereign is also love. You need to meet Hendrik Kraemer in the flesh to feel the friendliness and humility, and to see the twinkle in his eye.

I could have wished that he had spent more time on some of the people on the frontier between Christianity and the other religions. I particularly regret his bare mention of Matteo Ricci and Robert de Nobili; surely they have something positive to teach us. I wish he had dealt with Tagore as fully as he did with Radhakrishnan. As an Anglican I would have liked to hear his critique of Bishop Westcott's *Gospel of Life* (Westcott's name doesn't even appear in the index). I would like to hear him in discussion with Roman and Anglican theologians about the Church as the Body of Christ

and its relation to the empirical expression of Christianity. Finally, I want to be much more adventurous and rash in encounter with other faiths than perhaps Dr. Kraemer would think safe, but I feel that I can dare to be so because of the principles he has laid down.

GEORGE APPLETON.

CONTEMPORARY CHURCH ART, by Anton Henze. Sheed & Ward, New York. 35/-. 128 pp.

DIE KUNST DER JUNGEN KIRCHEN, by Arno Lehmann. Ev. Verlagsanstalt, Berlin. DM. 24/-. 255 pp.

THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIAN ART, by D. Talbot Rice. Hodder & Stoughton, London. 42/-. 223 pp.

REMBRANDT AND THE GOSPEL, by W. A. Visser 't Hooft. SCM Press, London. 25/-. 193 pp.

HERVORMDE KERKBOUW NA. 1945, by W. J. G. van Mourik te Velp. Gravenhage. Fr. 25. 222 pp.

We sometimes say that in the ecumenical movement, the one thing that we have in common is the Bible. To read these five books is to realize that in the arts we have the beginnings of a common language also. Dr. Lehmann (who is a professor at the Martin-Luther University, Halle-Wittenberg) draws on the riches of the churches of Asia and Africa in recent times. Professor Talbot Rice (Professor of Fine Art at Edinburgh University) examines the beginnings of Christian art. Dr. Henze (Professor of History of Art at Munster Art School) brings together many European, Mexican, and American examples of fine Roman Catholic craftsmanship. Dr. Visser 't Hooft writes of Rembrandt as a great interpreter of the Bible. Mr. van Mourik te Velp edits the official publication of the Hervormde Kerk of the Netherlands. It is a pleasure to read and ruminate in these books. Three speak of a new virility, and a developing taste in the churches in the mid-twentieth century, while two take a backwards look at the great art of the Church, centuries ago.

There is something so stimulating in all this. It only seems a few years ago since there were endless words written about aesthetics, symbols, and the theoretical approach to the question¹. In the space

¹ Since this review was prepared an excellent little book has arrived which is most illuminating for the Christian who wants to know what all this "art fuss" is about: *Art as Communication* by John W. Dixon, Jr., Board of Education, Methodist Church, U.S.A. 92 pp. The letter-press is disappointing after the promise of the cover. The text I enjoyed very much.

of ten years it seems to have been possible to collect a considerable quantity of information about the emergent forms of Christian art and church architecture in our own generation, and there are of course a number of other books and folios besides the ones which are the subject of this review. This is not at all to suggest that the fog has lifted. There is still plenty of that. The rebellion against traditional forms has still to run its course in the West. The rootlessness of the contemporary artist in the West is still a matter of grave concern. The churches still do not see clearly the implication of becoming patrons again. There is a good deal of ephemeral and conceited work being done in the service of the Church. But let us at any rate be grateful that as far as church-art is concerned (if we can use that word) there is a very great deal to see and to discuss, *and* to admire.

The ultimate task of the artist is to point to the reality beyond the symbols that he uses. We have travelled so far from the original intention of the ancient Christian symbols that it is arguable as to whether the Epiphany, for instance, is meaningful any more through the story of the three wise men and the many paintings on this theme. It is perhaps asking for trouble to open a discussion like this in a short book review, but the point that must be made is this, and it is one reason why these books are so valuable. The contemporary artist is now struggling to create new, or adapt existing symbols, which reflect the ethos of the contemporary world. It is a world-wide and an ecumenical task. And in the West it is exceedingly difficult because of the failure of the modern imagination to discover a meaningful symbolism at all. All this entails a willingness on the part of Christians to experiment and, if necessary, to fail, in order that there may evolve a church-art which is worthy of Christ the Redeemer, and which may speak of the dignity of his world, as well as its confusion.

The Beginnings of Christian Art is good to handle and to study. It studies the influences which moulded the developing Christian art in the first thousand years in the West and until the sixteenth century in Byzantium. It is a distinguished exposition and admirably illustrated with excellent examples from each period. Many of the paintings, sculptures, and ornaments are in singularly inaccessible places, and the quality of the photography is exceedingly good.

Rembrandt and the Gospel is a most scholarly and illuminating book. Its primary contribution is to our understanding of Rembrandt as a painter who *lived* with his Bible. Dr. Visser 't Hooft's penetrating comparison of the Counter-Reformation synthesis between beauty and church strategy, and the biblical faith of Rembrandt is of great

interest and value. His commentary throughout the book on Rembrandt's rejection of the baroque style, and Rembrandt's great conception of Christ the incognito is most enlightening. The plates (at the end of the book) of Rembrandt's paintings, etchings, and drawings are well done, although one or two of the drawings lack sharpness in reproduction. (The German title in Switzerland is *Rembrandts Weg Zum Evangelium*.)

To move to the contemporary period, the official publication of the Dutch Hervormde Kerk folio about their church building scheme since 1945 (*Hervormde Kerkbouw*) is delightfully produced. It is most interesting to see the revolution that is taking place in design, sculpture, and furnishing in our churches in Europe. England is far, far behind the Netherlands, Germany, and Scandinavia. I am quite ashamed to compare this folio with similar folios produced by the Church of England, for instance, although even in our country there are rumblings of revolt! What is interesting about this volume is the obvious impact that the liturgical movement is now having on church architecture. It is a pity that the summary from Dutch into French, English, and German is not a little longer at the end of the book. It is also a pity that the literal translation into English is quite obscure (to me) in parts.

The Art of the Young Churches published in Berlin is impressive for its catalogue and appraisal of developing styles in the "young church areas". It is interesting to see that from within the life of the Church the universality of our themes and symbols speaks across differing treatments. The problem of making our symbols both indigenous and relevant is the same wherever we are. It is difficult to judge a great number of the 170 illustrations out of their context, and also because to an extent the photography and reproduction (and lay-out) has not done justice to many of them. But it is a moving and exciting book and one which should be better known.

Contemporary Church Art is an outstanding production. The text is an illuminating essay on the present developments in some areas of the Roman Catholic Church and the relation between liturgy and design is well defined. The enthusiasm for a possible universal style of church-art is however a matter for debate, as are some of the basic presuppositions about the relation of the artist to the Church. But no praise is too high for the production in letter-press, choice of paper, and illustrations. Extravagantly successful photography lends great distinction to this large collection of plates illustrative of architecture, silverware, vestments, furnishings, sculpture, carving, glass, etc., which are all of a high order of design and experimentation. (This

book was originally published in German under the title *Kirchliche Kunst der Gegenwart*.)

For those who are concerned about the relation between the Church and the arts, there is much hope and stimulus in any one of these volumes.

FRANK GLENDENNING.

THE NEW MAN, Christianity and Man's Coming of Age, by Ronald Gregor Smith. SCM Press, London. 120 pp. 10s. 6d.

As the title implies, this book is chiefly concerned with the understanding of man. The author examines first the biblical foundations and finds that the Bible's understanding of man is inextricably bound up with its understanding of history. History, as the story of Israel shows, is, however, the history of God as well as man, and "the entry of God as the other chief figure into this history is not an extra to the history, but is the other side of one situation" (p. 17).

However, this view of man and of history did not prevail during the centuries which followed the establishment of Christianity. Beginning with Augustine and culminating with Thomas Aquinas, a metaphysical view of history dominated Christian thinking, which "was founded on his two-fold insight into this world as being simultaneously a ruined place, 'the hospital for the ruined millionaire', and the place where sojourners travelled on their way to the city of promise" (p. 33). This view was subsequently overthrown by what Smith calls the "Great Revolution", the Renaissance, and its religious concomitant, the Reformation. Again, however, the break-through was not complete, and the Revolution ended up in several deadlocks, represented by such movements as the Evangelical Party in England in the eighteenth century and the elaboration of creeds and confessions in the churches of the Reformation. Among these is also counted the recent emerging of biblical theology.

Smith sees indications of solutions to these deadlocks in the attempt of Bultmann, Gogarten, and so on to seek new terms for the understanding of the Bible as well as for relating it to, and integrating it into, the modern world, where man has now "come of age". In this connection a fervent plea is made for the renewal of the Church. Sharp but necessary criticism is voiced concerning the irrelevance of the Church's life, including her evangelistic attempts.

It is fascinating to follow the author as he unfolds his view and vision of history in the course of the chapters. The brilliant vision should not however overshadow major questions which arise from it: 1. Whether the *Lordship* of God *over* (and in) history is taken seriously by describing his acts as one part of the historical situation? 2. Whether the radical nature of man's newness in Christ, as suggested by biblical expressions like "born again", is not clouded by such a unified view of history? It is true that today the Church needs to break through its traditional shells in order to identify itself with modern man. But this identification in itself is not renewal; unless the Church is first renewed and can render a *clear* witness to the newness of life, its identification with the world will result not in evangelizing the world but in conforming to it.

ESSAYS IN LIBERALITY, by Alec R. Vidler. SCM Press, London. 189 pp. 15s.

The essays and lectures contained in this collection were written for various occasions over a period of fifteen years (1942-1957). A look at the table of contents might suggest that they were thrown together at random: The Future of Theology, Freedom and Responsibility, Holy Worldliness, The Welfare State, What is Anglicanism? — these are only half of the titles. What is then the justification for bringing them under one title? The reason is actually indicated in the term *liberality*, for a basic concern pervades all the articles and lectures. However, this does not mean that Vidler talks about one and the same thing regardless of the particular topic for the occasion. He does not have a "line" to defend in any of them, in order to provide for unity. Rather as he discusses such a wide range of problems the unity appears as the wholeness of the person who bears these concerns. For Vidler, *liberality* is not liberalism, it is "the opposite not of the conservative, but of fanatical or bigoted or intransigent. It points to the *esprit large* and away from the *idée fixe*" (pp. 21 f.). In the ultimate sense this becomes an attitude of faith, the attitude of the man "who can at once rigorously doubt and sincerely believe, in short, the man who has discovered that it is not only the sinner but the doubter who is justified by faith" (p. 28).

Another aspect of this *liberality* is shown in the lecture on Holy Worldliness. Vidler defines it at one point as "living in the open air" (p. 111), or as an attitude which enjoys the world while at

the same time perceiving its seducing power. If this is the basis of liberality, a person does not need to change hats if he shifts from a so-called religious to a so-called secular topic.

It is impossible in this short space to give an adequate account of the author's wealth of insights into the various areas of concern which he touches upon. Two quotations may serve as illustrations: In speaking of the Christians' responsibility in the Welfare State (it could also be the state of "peace, progress, and prosperity!") he suggests that "instead of denouncing the materialism of the age, which is a very easy thing to do, Christians would be better occupied in discovering how the evident tendency of the Welfare State to make us all preoccupied with security and cosiness can be effectively balanced by contrary provisions that will keep us aware of our ultimate insecurity except in the hands of our Saviour" (p. 124). And finally, where he speaks about the future of theology, he says: "My forecast is, that if there is a revival of theology, it will be primarily the work of laymen . . . It is my experience that there is more interest in the basic theological questions as distinguished from what is secondary and trivial, among laymen outside as well as inside the churches, than there is in many clerical circles" (pp. 38f.).

NEW TESTAMENT FAITH FOR TODAY, by Amos N. Wilder. Harper and Bros., New York. 186 pp.

This book attempts to fill a large order. The title is only one of the many ways in which the baffling problem is stated many times in the book: how are we going to proclaim the New Testament faith today so that the scientific humanist, the existentialist, the Marxist, or any other modern men are at least confronted with a creditable view of man, the universe, and God?

Wilder does not underestimate the difficulties of such an enterprise. Perhaps the most characteristic mark of the whole book is the author's sensitivity to the contemporary mind and his willingness to take it seriously. The difficulties are on both sides, the modern man as well as the New Testament record. There is a gap between the two which makes the Bible appear as a strange book to the people of today. In this connection Wilder is especially concerned about the "Language of Faith" which characterizes the writings of the New Testament. He recognizes this at the same time as an obstacle to understanding as well as a virtue which

enables the authors of the New Testament literature to convey the particular content of their message to the world.

In the light of this dilemma, how do we communicate the Gospel to the world of today? Wilder's answer to this question is contained essentially in three chapters: The Proclamation of Jesus, The Message of Paul, and The Johannine Witness. We are leaving aside the question of whether Wilder succeeds in terms of the above problem. The more pressing question is perhaps: what is it that Wilder really attempts to communicate to modern man? We are told: "Our task today is then to offer a faith that redeems and transfigures the flesh and the world" (p. 23). Obviously, this definition of our task is based on the more general view of the role of religion: "The distinctive function of religion is to offer men authentic knowledge of and contact with God" (p. 23). No doubt there is an urgent need today seriously to reflect on the problem of "Commending the Gospel to Our Time". The WSCF project on "The Life and Mission of the Church" definitely points into this problem. But precisely what is the "Gospel" which is to be commended? Is it the offer of a "faith", of "authentic knowledge and contact with God"? Can we really *offer* such things? And is the Gospel actually *some thing* to be offered? The decisive question seems to lie at this point. For if we are agreed that this is our task, it is quite in order to be concerned about making this offer as acceptable as possible to modern man, and the question whether the fundamentalistic or demythologizing approach is more acceptable would be a vital one indeed.

But we might not be agreed that the Gospel is *some thing* to be offered by us, because we are faced with the Gospel which is the offering of *some one*, Jesus Christ who offers himself. And we are offering ourselves to him, and to others in his service. The question is then not whether we can make the Gospel acceptable to modern man, but whether *we* have accepted Christ's offering, whereby we are accepted by him with (and in spite of) our "modern" mind. Perhaps this is really the question which Wilder wants to raise. He admits at the end "that we must ultimately rest the appeal of the Gospel upon the work of God in men's hearts" (p. 181). God working in men's - modern men's - hearts — as long as this is true *for us* the Gospel will surely commend itself to our time.

THOMAS WEISER.